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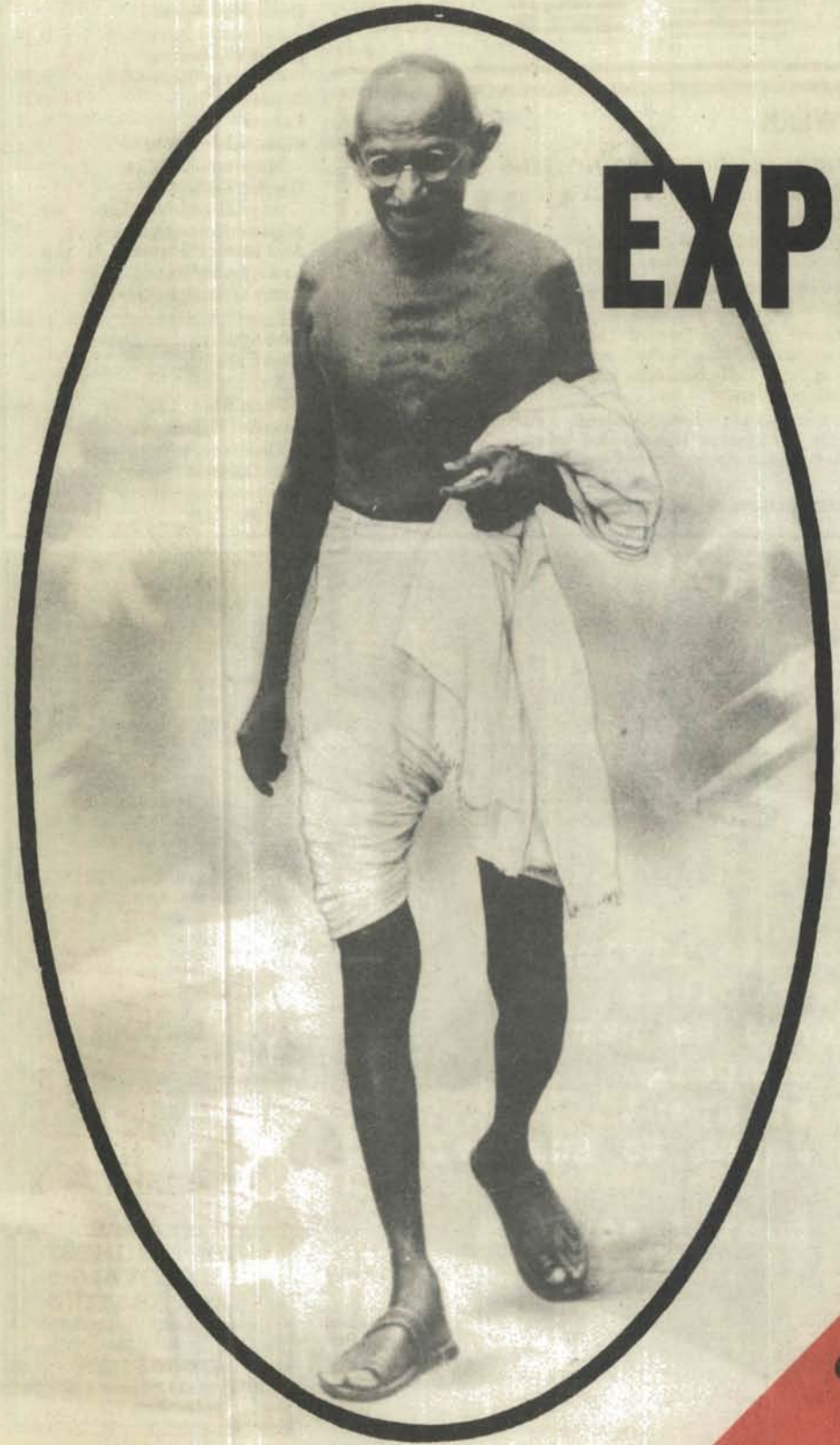

EXPLOITED MYTH

Cruise missiles fall short

Farmers skim off the fat

Starting this week: Alan Brien's new paperback column

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New Statesman

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Cover photo: Indian High Commission

India's messiah
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Tomahawk off target
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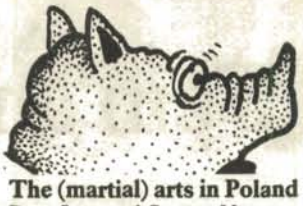

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Barbara Wootton looks back on a hundred years of female emancipation since the Married Women's Property Act

Paul Addision writes about the 1945 Labour government and reviews Kenneth Harris's major biography of Attlee

'Vaclav Racek' replies to Edward Thompson. The debate about nuclear disarmament in East as well as West Europe, which began in the *NS* in April 1981, continues with a rejoinder from the anti-Soviet dissident in Prague

PLUS an extract from Milan Kundera's forthcoming novel *The Joke*; Poetry by **Seamus Heaney** and others; Christmas quiz; Critics' book choice; Recommended records; The history of Jesus rock

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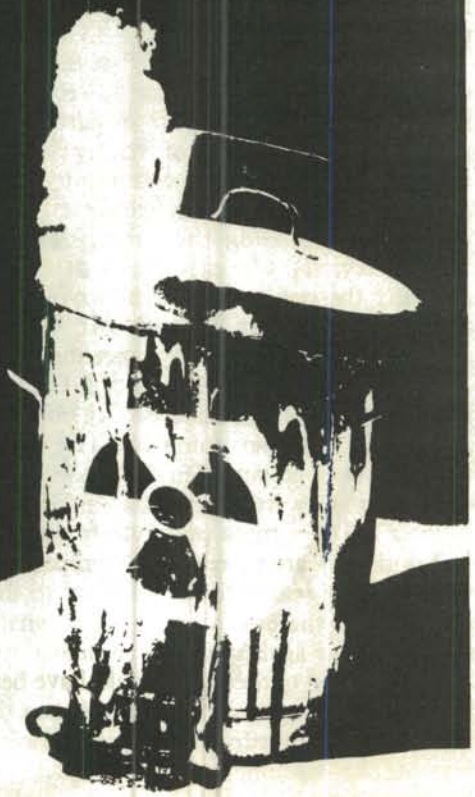

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New Statesman Vol 104 No 2699 10 December 1982

Sinn Fein and the GLC

BEFORE THE BALLYKELLY bomb outrage the row over Ken Livingstone's invitation to two Sinn Fein leaders to pay an officially recognised visit to the Greater London Council was pretty synthetic. Mr Livingstone, who is a politican and understands publicity, had chosen with many of his GLC Labour colleagues to arrange a symbolic meeting that would hit the headlines. His political opponents, from Mrs Thatcher downwards, simply scented an opportunity to score political points designed to embarrass the established Labour Party leadership – and seized it with both hands.

Since Ballykelly, the sense that a visit to London by Messrs Adams and Morrison, designed to attract maximum publicity this Christmas, is not exactly appropriate corresponds much more genuinely to a feeling of revulsion about what has been going on in Northern Ireland for more than a decade. In this atmosphere, any rational judgment about the pros and cons of the original Livingstone invitation is made more difficult – particularly in view of the way in which Mrs Thatcher for the Conservatives and Mr Jenkins for the Social Democrats have chosen to exploit events politically.

Mr Whitelaw's decision to ban the British Sinn Fein members from Britain, using the 'temporary' power of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, can only further obscure the political issues at stake and continue to replace political debate with violent slogans. The exclusion order placed on the Sinn Fein representatives on the advice of Sir Kenneth Newman, whose service in Northern Ireland is well-known, confirms the primacy of police and military 'solutions' over political negotiations.

There can be no question that the GLC invitation was an overtly political act. But what is wrong with politicians making overt political gestures? In particular, what is wrong in principle with the leader of the largest municipal government in Europe, representing a community with a substantial Irish population which has been subjected over the years to Irish terrorism, discussing the subject with the leader of Sinn Fein? Previous administrations at County Hall have met officially the political representatives of the Protestant community in Northern Ireland. Mr Whitelaw himself, when Northern Ireland Secretary, met the representatives of Sinn Fein for extensive discussions. If a Tory cabinet minister may meet them, how can there be any objection of principle in a Labour GLC leader doing so? The arguments of this kind that have been advanced in the last week are pure humbug.

It is certainly true that some minority elements within the Labour Party – more particularly within the Labour parties in London – are increasingly sympathetic towards 'violent' tactics in the search for a 'solution' to the Northern Ireland problem, on the basis of a simplistic analysis that the IRA is fighting a war against a neo-colonialist occupying power. Mr Steve Bundred of the GLC would have been more convincing had he made unequivocal statements on the record condemning terrorism, murder and sectarian violence from any quarter. Mr Livingstone will presumably condemn the Home Secretary's decision. He should also reaffirm strongly that he is a member of a political party which does not and will not sanction murder.

IN REALITY the prospects for Northern Ireland have seldom been bleaker. The economy and employment levels mark it as one of the worst industrial disaster areas in Western Europe – and there is no prospect of it getting much better in the immediate future. The level of violence and killing – more than 2,500 dead since the present troubles began – is higher than at any time in almost 70 years of intermittent Irish terrorism. The opposed sectarian paramilitary forces are entrenched in this fatal deadlock. Worst of all, despite the best efforts of the political optimists, there is no real present expectation of a substantial breakthrough on the political level.

Faced with this situation, it is essential to encourage all political contact and dialogue that seems to contain any positive glimmer at all. One minor crack in the concrete of Irish politics has been the election of Sinn Fein candidates to the Northern Ireland Assembly. It was a crack because, given the strength of its vote, Sinn Fein now faces the need to adjust itself to something like mass political support.

And it was a crack because London politicians can no longer argue that Sinn Fein represents nothing but a minority and the 'men of violence'. History is littered with evidence that in the end a political solution to violent civil strife can only be found via an eventual dialogue with the political representatives of the 'men of violence'. In 1983 more people need to talk to Gerry Adams – not fewer. □

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Cabinet protects and revises secret civil defence plans

THE HOME OFFICE has refused to reveal details of a secret plan which may turn the government's civil defence policy on its head. The Cabinet 'Shelter and Evacuation Working Party' is now submitting proposals to the Cabinet which would mean preparing to move 36 million people out of their homes in the run-up to a nuclear attack. Another option would involve moving people out of major target areas only. Since 1965 government policy has been that all people should stay at home during any nuclear attack.

Mr Mayhew considers his bunker

Home Office Minister of State, Mr Patrick Mayhew, was challenged about the new proposals at a meeting of Britain's 'Nuclear Free Zone' authorities in Manchester last Friday (see below). But he refused to discuss the proposals, claiming that all Cabinet policy discussions had to be kept secret.

Mayhew's reluctance to discuss the subject reflects many Ministers' deep concern about the implications of the new policy. It is in essence a desperate attempt to restore credibility to civil defence plans which, at present, require the civil population to stay at home without blast protection, even in cities and near major targets. The widely ridiculed official pamphlet 'Protect and Survive' has already in effect been abandoned. A new pamphlet will be published by the Home Office early next year to replace it. It will cost around £3, be a 'glossy', and is at present known only by the revealing working title of 'Public Do-It-Yourself Civil Defence Guidance'.

If the Cabinet decides instead to go for an evacuation plan, then the Home Office will be embarrassed by the implicit acknowledgement that its previous policies and pronouncements have been dishonest. For more than 20 years the government has refused to acknowledge that particular bases or cities might be nuclear targets, on the grounds that such an admission would weaken public support for the nuclear deterrent by making citizens aware of their vulnerability.

The GLC's spokesman in the Nuclear Free Zone movement, Councillor Simon Turney, revealed details of the plans which had been given to local authorities to last week's conference. The major evacuation scheme, devised, he said, by Home Office scientists, would involve two-thirds of the population. But the scheme's difficulties, from the government point of view, included 'enormous logistic problems' – clashes with troop movements, fuel rationing, protection from fallout, and food distribution and rationing.

The government has also examined a plan to renovate deep shelters underneath London which are claimed to be capable of housing 70,000 people. Another extraordinary scheme suggests using the London underground tunnels to provide shelter for a million people. All evacuation and shelter schemes would be extremely expensive.

Unlike the secret Cabinet schemes, the Home Office's proposed new regulations, which will force local councils to build bunkers for officials and take part in exercises like the 'postponed' *Hard Rock*, were made available at the beginning of this week. Called the Civil Defence (General-Local Authority Functions) Regulations 1983, they contain new powers for the Home Secretary to 'direct' local authorities to obey government orders, without any discretion. A new regulation will also allow the government to direct the conscription of local authority employees, whatever their normal jobs, to undergo civil defence training and take part in exercises.

The new regulations also contain hints that the government may revive a civil defence corps. They suggest, for the first time in 15 years, that providing a 'rescue service' might be a new civil defence function. The Home Office hopes to prevent 'Nuclear Free' local authorities refusing to take part in exercises like *'Hard Rock'* by creating a new duty for them to 'take part in any training exercises organised by the Minister'.

Duncan Campbell

Chris Horrie adds

A week before publication of the government's new regulations on civil defence is an odd time for a conference on local government and civil defence. Bill Risby, hosting the 3 December conference in Manchester of the 'nuclear-free zone' local authorities, admitted that the steering committee would have to meet again this week for detailed consideration of the proposals.

Seventy-five of the 144 'nuclear-free' authorities sent around 200 delegates. It was a Labour-dominated affair. One of two Tories, Steve Fitton from Rochdale, walked out when his speech heartily praising government defence policy was ruled out of order.

The conference won from celebrity guest speaker Patrick Mayhew the concession that the time for consultation on the new regulations would be extended. However, one of the main weapons against recalcitrant local authorities is an ancient and obscure clause in contracts – 'an invisible clause, exhumed', according to undoubted conference superstar Simon Turney of the GLC – to force council employees to take part in civil defence. This, said Mike Jackson of Watford, was the 'Achilles heel' of the proposals.

As numbers in the Victorian council chamber dwindled, a steering committee resolution was put to the vote, but not before Stoke-on-Trent successfully introduced an amendment stating that the nuclear-free zone movement believes that there is 'little or no' protection for the population so long as we are a nuclear weapons state. Previous policy had been that there is 'no protection for the majority of the population'. The change said the more genned-up councillors along with the CND-observer contingent, gives the Home Office a loophole big enough to drive their propaganda through. □

Maid of all work

A DOMESTIC assistant at Cheltenham General Hospital has been sacked at the end of her probationary period for refusing to clean a private ward. Karen Robinson, 22, had been employed since 1 November on general cleaning and tea-making duties. On 18 November she was asked, for the first time, to do a cleaning job on the private Boulton-Price Ward and said she objected on principle. The following day she was told by a supervisor that she could not be employed unless she was prepared to work anywhere in the hospital. A week later she was officially told that she would not be employed after her one month's probation.

In a letter to the Area Health Authority last week, Ms Robinson asked 'why is it not possible for an individual who conscientiously objects to working in the private sector to work wholly in the NHS sector?' Michael Sutcliffe, the Sector Administrator for Cheltenham hospitals told the *New Statesman* that he thought Ms Robinson's was 'a perfectly reasonable point of view' but that it was 'simply not practicable' to separate private from NHS work – even though there is a private ward in the hospital. Up to 1978, private patients were in designated beds but since then the government has merely set ceilings for hospitals on how many private patients to take. It's up to the hospital to decide how and where private patients should be cared for.

Out of 635 beds in Cheltenham hospitals, 15 are private. Patients pay £90 a day (excluding the consultant's fee) but, said Mr Sutcliffe, they receive no special service for their money which goes into the general hospital accounts. Apart from the consultants, no NHS staff receive any extra payment for providing a service for private patients. Although Ms Robinson is the only member of staff ever to have stated a conscientious objection to servicing paying patients, a NUPE member at Cheltenham General Hospital said a lot of ancillary staff disliked doing private work.

Sarah Benton

Deer hunters at bay

ONE OF THE only four remaining deer hunts in England could find its sport frustrated if a decision taken by villagers of Holford, Somerset, is put into practice. A private poll conducted among the 184 voters in the parish has shown a surprisingly large two-thirds majority in favour of banning the Quantock Staghounds from the area altogether. Apart from the village itself, Holford parish covers a large tract of the surrounding countryside and is a regular meeting place for the hunt.

This unusual vote – organised by six local residents through independent solicitors at a cost of £300 – was prompted by a series of incidents involving the hunt. In the most recent, an exhausted stag was first injured on a fence and then collapsed in a field near the centre of Holford. Eventually it was shot in front of a large crowd. 'The road was blocked for half a mile with people wanting to watch,' said Mi-

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chelle Bjergfeld, proprietor of the local hotel, 'it was like a riot.' The owner of the land is now taking out legal action for poaching.

Other incidents have included the drowning of a stag when it was driven out into the sea and a 'kill' in front of families at a local tea garden. None of the six who organised the poll is willing to be named for fear of harassment by hunt supporters.

Whether the vote is effective or not depends partly on Holford Parish Council, which last month decided to ask the hunt to either stick to an agreed code of conduct or keep out of the area. Parish chairman Colonel Barnet Grandfield said the council was neither for nor against the hunt, but still described hunt followers as 'a rabble' whose irritation to locals and visitors alike had been 'going on for too long'. Locals also say that deer are now far less common on the Quantock Hills – in part the result of poachers after valuable venison.

Both the Quantocks and neighbouring Exmoor are favourite hunting areas for deer and foxes alike, with roughly 20 meets each week at this time of year. The Holford vote aside, the hunters have also themselves been harassed by the League Against Cruel Sports, which owns hundreds of acres of 'sanctuaries' in the region – including 58 acres in Holford – and prosecutes for any provable trespass. Meanwhile, the hunt itself says it will ignore any ban as a result of the vote.

Crispin Aubrey

BA's unsung profits

GOVERNMENT PLANS to press on with the sale of 51 per cent of British Airways could be an equal scandal to the recent sale of the public's interests in Britoil. In order to get investors to subscribe, BA will also be sold off at a bargain basement price. But new financial figures derived from BA itself show that the airline has over the years been a major public asset and a substantial profit earner.

Last year, with government encouragement, BA put through a massive redundancy programme and charged an extra large depreciation charge on its aircraft fleet, in order to make its profit and loss account in future more attractive to potential private sector buyers. Excluding these one-off charges last year, BA (and its predecessors) have made a profit of no less than £438 million over the past 20 years (measured in real terms at 1981 prices to allow for inflation). This figure fully allows for interest and tax payments. Even counting in the whole of the depreciation and redundancy payments, the airline was still in profit over the period.

Nor is it true that BA has been inefficient and in need of the discipline of market forces, as the Tories claim. Since 1971-2 there has been a 33 per cent reduction in the airline's non-fuel unit costs. Even including much higher fuel prices, these unit costs have been brought down by 15 per cent – a better performance that almost any other large international carrier.

Yet it is extremely unlikely that in its present depressed state the stock market would be willing to pay anything like the £280 million which 51 per cent of BA's assets are worth. Thus, the assets will be offered at a substantial discount on their real value to ensure the sale.

David Keys

Steel cuts move south

THE REPRIEVE of Ravenscraig steel works through a rebellion of ministers at the Scottish Office has done nothing to restore sagging morale at the British Steel Corporation's English plants in Scunthorpe and Teesside. It now seems almost inevitable that these plants will bear the brunt of the job losses which BSC chairman Ian MacGregor is obliged to make in line with the government's and EEC's strategy on the worldwide slump in steel orders.

Last week, it was announced that 1,500 jobs would go at the Redcar blast furnace plant at Teeside. The blast furnace, built at a cost of £400 million just 10 years ago, can produce 5 million tonnes of steel a year. It now seems likely that the next round of steel cuts will be announced before Christmas. A leaked management document found circulating at the Scunthorpe works a month ago showed that over the next 18 months there would be 4,300 further redundancies split between the Scunthorpe and Teesside works. BSC did not deny that the document was genuine, but said then that it was only one of a number of options being presented to the government. In the light of the Ravenscraig decision, it now appears to be the most likely option.

However, the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, the major steel union, has refused to discuss the document. As one member said: 'They are pretending it does not exist.' There is little hope that action by the ISTC can halt, or even delay further swingeing reductions in manpower. There was no enthusiasm behind the ISTC's 'blockade' of steel imports at Immingham, and last month the union stopped refusing to discuss redundancies and is now in the process of negotiating them.

Its reasons were that if it did not, it would be unable to negotiate a national pay-claim. But as MacGregor is committed to a policy of locally-negotiated deals linked to productivity, the ISTC's chance of getting a uniform settlement appear remote. A more persuasive reason may well have been that in Scunthorpe, members of the General and Municipal Workers Union have negotiated their own redundancy terms with BSC without the aid of their union.

John Hatton

MISCELLANY

His brother's keeper

Roy Medvedev is a dissident historian who lives in Moscow. His brother Zhores Medvedev is a dissident scientist who lives in Britain. Clear? Not if you're on the central committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which recently sent an angry letter to our own dear Communist Party. The cause of complaint was an article entitled 'The USSR after Brezhnev' which appeared (rather presciently) in the September issue of *Marxism Today*. The article was written by Roy Medvedev (the one who's still in Moscow), but the central committee's letter thundered about the iniquity of *Marxism Today* giving space to a man who had lost his Soviet citizenship and was now 'in exile in the West'. Our own dear CP has apparently sent a polite reply.

Bound for glory?

A member of the Social Democratic Party may sit on the TUC's general council before long. The person in question is one Mike Blick, chairman of NALGO's local government committee, and his chance of glory is a consequence of last year's decision to adopt a new system of appointment to the general council, based upon a union's size. As a result NALGO can have three members of the general council automatically in the main section and one elected in the women's section. This will mean an increase of two on its current representation, and some members of NALGO's executive are insisting that the additions should be rank-and-filers rather than officials. Although the two most likely figures are the chairmen of the economic committee and the general purposes committee, Mr Blick's name is also being mentioned. The union will decide between officials and rank-and-file at its executive meeting in January.

Huntin' and bombin'

Edward Leigh, the disagreeable smoothie who runs the anti-CND 'Coalition for Peace Through Security', and who has publicly advocated American-style 'targeting' techniques to bring down MPs who disagree with him, may soon become an MP himself. He has just been chosen as prospective Conservative candidate for Gainsborough, where the Tory majority at the last election was over 7,000. The retiring incumbent, Sir Marcus Kimball, believes in targeting of a different kind: he has been chairman of the British Field Sports Society since 1966, and his daughter arrived for her wedding last month with her leg in plaster after a hunting accident.

Decline of the West

Talking of Tory candidates, what is to happen to 'Nigel West', who was recently taken to court by the attorney-general over his new book on MI5? Under his real name of Rupert Allason, 'Nigel West' fought Kettering for the Tories at the last election and very nearly won it (he cut the Labour majority from 11,0000 to 1,000). Will his legal bust-up with a Conservative government lessen his attractiveness in the eyes of local Tory associations who are looking for a candidate? We can but hope . . .

All clear

A new 'Willie-ism' has been unearthed in our Home Secretary's unique store of folk wisdom. Last week the Commons debated cable television. One of the arguments over cable is whether the companies that lay the cables should also be allowed to make and sell programmes – or whether the provision of cables and provision of programmes should be kept separate. Willie announced that there would be 'no mandatory separation', but gave no reason for his decision. Phillip Whitehead, a Labour MP and former television producer, interrupted to ask why – 'surely we have a right to know?' According to Hansard, the following exchange ensued:

Mr Whitelaw: I said 'no mandatory separation' and that is what I believe.

Hon Members: Why?

Mr Whitelaw: Simply because I believe it to be the correct decision.

An Hon Member: That is a circular argument.

Mr Whitelaw: It may be a circular argument, but it is none the worse for that, because circular arguments are sometimes very good.

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Nationalists against socialists

LAST Thursday, polling day in Glasgow, started badly for the Labour Party in Scotland with news that a fire, deliberately started at its Dundee headquarters during the night, had caused £15,000 of damage. A previously unheard-of nationalist splinter group, Army of the Gael, claimed responsibility. This came on top of a still unsolved £40,00 petrol bombing of Keir Hardie house in Glasgow at the start of the Queen's Park by-election campaign.

In general, Labour's Scottish Organiser, Jimmy Allison, describes it as the dirtiest by-election campaign he has been involved in, featuring various attacks on Labour premises in the constituency and the distribution of 'obnoxious literature attacking the late MP.' This had no publisher's imprint on it. At the end of the day, however, it was a very good result for Labour.

The turn-out of 47 per cent was higher than expected in a shifting inner-city population. Labour's share was 56 per cent, down 8 per cent in spite of the first appearance of a Liberal who took 9 per cent. The Tory also lost his deposit, but the SNP doubled their vote to 20 per cent – confirmation, says Allison, that the SNP are still Labour's biggest threat. The SNP say that the result is part of a pattern, which gives them significantly better results than the opinion polls would suggest. In recent weeks they have gained one local government seat from Labour in Renfrew (albeit in very distinctive local circumstances) and one from the Tories in Grampian. In short, there is enough evidence to suggest that they could still expect to take a solid 20-30 per cent of the Scottish vote in a general election.

Doubts remain, however, about their ability to pull themselves together as a coherent party in time. Last week they launched into another bout of acrimonious debate at a meeting of their National Council (a tier of party government between full conference and executive) in Glasgow. Once again the issue was the expulsion of left-wingers who have allied themselves to the Scottish Socialist Society. There is an apparently unbridgeable gap between the 'traditionalists' led by party Chairman and MP, Gordon Wilson, who say that membership of the Society breaches the party's ban of groups, and the Left, led by Jim Sillars, who maintain that the Society is no more than an all-party discussion group and not therefore covered by the ban. Wilson's faction continue to hold the narrow majority.

Brian Wilson

Car parkers drive out Robin Cook

ROBIN COOK, a Labour front bench Treasury spokesman and a well-known nuclear disarmament campaigner, looks almost certain to lose his Edinburgh Central constituency after nearly three years of arguments over proposed boundary changes. After a saga involving two public inquiries and at least five different sets of proposals, the wheel has come full circle and the Boundary Commission seem set to re-adopt the proposals they first made in April 1980, thereby transforming Edinburgh Central into a safe Conservative Seat.

Following the second public inquiry in October, the Assistant Commissioner, D. A. O. Edward, has recommended that the Commission revert to their original plan to include the largely middle-class area of Murrayfield/Dean in Edinburgh Central, while excluding the working-class communities of Moat/Stenhouse. The Commission has still to issue a final verdict, but it is likely that they will accept the Commissioner's recommendation.

Although the real battles on constituency boundaries are clearly political, the Boundary Commission is meant to use population trends and community ties as the main criteria for determining change. But in his report Mr Edward said that the arguments on these issues were so finely balanced that there was need for a new 'objective criterion' He selected a map of central area parking controls, commenting 'from the point of view of human behaviour and activity, this is a map of Central Edinburgh' His choice is, to say the least, bizarre. The latest 1981 Census breakdown shows that Central Edinburgh, where only 30 per cent of households have access to a car, is among the constituencies with the lowest levels of car ownership in Scotland. Parking controls may be important for commuters from other areas, but they are irrelevant to the vast bulk of city centre dwellers.

Central Edinburgh Labour Party, in its most recent submission to the Boundary Commission objecting to Mr Edward's report, points out that the only party which supports the current proposals is the Conservatives. The speed with which the Commission has acted over recent months has alarmed Labour activists who fear the Thatcher Government's determination to fight the next general election on the new boundaries. After the first inquiry, there was a gap of nearly 11 months before the revised proposals were published, compared to a period of just 12 working days after the second inquiry.

Rob Edwards

Pam Isherwood

Under surveillance: the church sit-in organised by the English Collective of Prostitutes

Prostitutes' survey

POLICE in the King's Cross area, who have been accused of harassing prostitutes taking part in a survey on prostitution, say that they have apologised to the English Collective of Prostitutes which is organising the survey. In a letter to Martin Ennals of the GLC's Police Support Unit, Deputy Assistant Commissioner D. J. Hanson said that Commander Chambers of the Albany Street station had 'already apologised to Anne Neale for any impropriety which may have occurred.' Hanson also writes that 'police patrolling the area were instructed that they were not to question prostitutes about the questionnaire.' However, Anne Neale, of the Collective, which has links with the Wages for Housewives campaign, says she has never received an apology.

Despite apologising, Commander Chambers also denies that any harassment actually took place, as does Commander John Newing, responsible for Community Relations. He wrote to Professor Margaret Stacey of the University of Warwick, the academic adviser to the survey, stating 'categorically' that there has been no harassment. The English Collective of Prostitutes, who last month held a sit-in at a King's Cross church in protest at police behaviour, claim that officers have threatened prostitutes seen with the questionnaire. They allege that some police officers have accused women taking part in the survey of being 'trouble-makers'. However, the prostitutes are very reluctant to come forward with their allegations and so they cannot be followed up.

The GLC gave the Collective £7,600 to carry out the survey which aims to find out why women become involved in prostitution, how their lives are shaped by the current law, and what barriers exist stopping women leaving prostitution.

Jane Root

Direct action on chicken ranch

THREE ANIMAL rights activists have made complaints against Greater Manchester Police over treatment they say they received following their arrest at a poultry farm last June. The three were part of a group which entered premises at Buckley Hill Farm near Manchester to show the press and the public the conditions in which battery hens are kept.

Over a dozen people were arrested, charged with criminal damage, (some eggs were accidentally broken) and a common law breach of the peace. After a trial from 12 to 14 October all were acquitted.

The complaint now laid against the police at Ashton-under-Lyme police station turns on two points. Firstly, the three say the group was held for 26 hours during which all they were offered to eat was corned beef sandwiches. They pointed out to the police that this was not suitable food for vegetarians but no alternative was provided. The protestors claim that vegetarian food was brought to the police station by supporters but was not given to them until several hours later.

Secondly, they also claim that on the hot summer's day they spent in the cells the police officers present kept closing the ventilation shutters causing considerable discomfort to those inside the cells. One of the three complainants, Mike Allian of the Northern Animal Liberation League says, they are also objecting to their 'arbitrary arrest'. Police are now looking into their complaint.

Ken Ferguson

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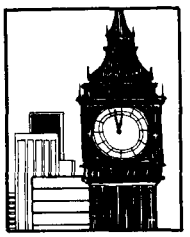


PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

Thatcherism: the miracle that never happened

HERE IS A prediction. Next Friday the government will publish its retail prices index for November. The index will show that the inflation rate is down to 6.2 per cent. Ministers will hail this as splendid news. So will the tabloid press. Last winter, they will remind us, the year-on-year inflation rate was 12 per cent; so in just one year the inflation rate has halved.

Here is another prediction. None of the ministers or tabloid papers who will crow so energetically about what is happening to prices will compare it with what is happening to productivity. For, over the same period, and measured in the same way, Britain's productivity growth rate has also halved. Output per person in manufacturing industry rose by 10.2 per cent during 1981. The latest figure – for the year to the third quarter of 1982 – shows a rise of only 4.6 per cent, and the end-year figure is likely to be much the same.

I cannot pretend I have read everything every minister has recently said about productivity – there are limits beyond which even the most conscientious journalist cannot reasonably be required to go – but from the speeches I have inspected, a pattern of sorts emerges.

Let us go back first to Sir Geoffrey Howe's budget speech last March:

> Productivity has been rising sharply. In manufacturing industry last year, output per man rose by about 10 per cent.

True but, as we shall see later, not the whole truth. Then, in July, Lord Cockfield, the trade secretary, went further:

> Output per head in manufacturing has risen by 12 per cent since the end of 1980.

And, indeed, when the figures for the second quarter of 1982 were in, they showed an increase of 12.3 per cent over the fourth quarter of 1980. Since July, however, the Treasury information machine appears to have been starved of new information, and has resorted to regurgitating old facts, not always accurately. On 18 October Nicholas Ridley, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, told the *Financial Times* European Banking Forum:

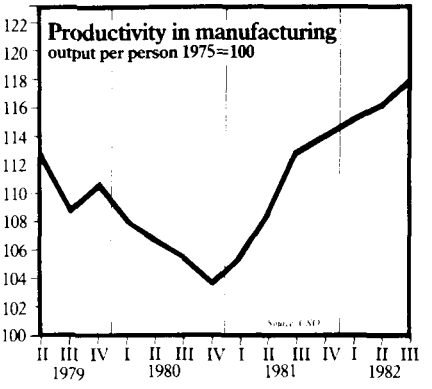
> Productivity has been improving rapidly; output per head is up by 12 per cent in manufacturing since the end of 1980.

Three months had elapsed since Lord Cockfield said the same thing – three months in which a whole new array of statistics projections and, surely, yet further evidence of 'rapidly improving' productivity should have become available. This evidence, however, did not seem to reach Mr Ridley in time.

Later the same week, Sir Geoffrey Howe delivered his Mansion House speech. Unlike the more junior Mr Ridley, the Chancellor was given something new to say – new, and wrong. 'Our country', said Sir Geoffrey, 'has earned respect in the international community . . . in bringing down inflation, and public borrowing, in establishing a firm monetary framework, and in achieving dramatic improvements in productivity.' Sir Geoffrey's evidence on this last point was that

> during 1981 . . . our productivity improved by 12 per cent.

In that statement the Chancellor contracted an 18-month growth in productivity into a 12-month period. Suppose



Peter Shore had said in a Commons debate 'prices rose by 17 per cent during 1981', he would have been wrong for exactly the same reason – and the Chancellor would have been the first to correct him.

THERE ARE two possible reasons why ministers seem unable to say anything new and correct about productivity. The first is that the Treasury officials who prepare their speeches know the truth, but daren't advise ministers to tell it. The second possibility is that Treasury officials are incompetent, and don't know the truth. Are they knaves or fools?

Unlike some on the left, I have always had a high regard for the technical competence of Treasury officials. I do not believe they are fools; they know what they are doing. They are failing to insert up-to-date productivity figures in ministers' speeches because they know perfectly well how poor those figures are. What is more, they know that to admit the truth would be to admit that the final redoubt of Thatcherism had been attacked and overrun. For the much-vaunted claim that the government's policies had jerked British industry into a new era of sustained innovation and productivity growth, comparable with Germany and Japan, will have been shown to be so much eye-wash. Instead, Britain experienced a one-off recessionary shake-out of labour, and has now returned to a productivity growth rate only slightly above its long-term trend.

The chart shows what has happened to manufacturing productivity since Mrs Thatcher became Prime Minister. During the first 18 months manufacturing output fell twice as fast as employment, so productivity fell. In 1981 output levelled off, but employment continued to fall – so productivity rose. In common with past recessions, redundancies continued after production stopped declining. This caused a fairly typical 'V'-shaped productivity graph; by the end of 1981 productivity was roughly back to the level that Mrs Thatcher inherited from Labour.

So, in claiming 1981 as a year of 'dramatic improvements in productivity', Sir Geoffrey was doing little more than describing the second half of a standard recessionary phenomenon. (Indeed, the true rise in productivity was rather less than 10 per cent; for one of the things that happened last year was that more overtime was worked: *hourly* productivity by shop-floor workers rose by just under 7 per cent.)

There is even some doubt as to how far the *statistical* rise in productivity measured actual industrial performance. To take an extreme example: if you measure the average productivity in two factories, and the less efficient factory closes down, then 'productivity' will appear to rise – even without anything changing in the factory that stays open. All that happens is that the less efficient factory ceases to pull down the average. Christopher Johnson, chief economic adviser to Lloyds Bank, argues that a significant part of the apparent rise in productivity stems from the statistical effect of inefficient factories closing down, rather than from improved working practices in the ones that stay open.

For the government, the true test of its policies on productivity was *not* what happened during the labour shake-out last year, but what would happen afterwards. Would the rise in productivity be sustained by better management employing more efficient working practices using the latest technology? Would the monetarist revolution so change the character of British industrial behaviour as to tilt the productivity graph on to a permanently steeper upward slope? However many steel mills or car factories Mrs Thatcher may care to quote, the overall answer is clear: her experiment with British industry has failed. She has not reformed its character, merely reduced its size. □

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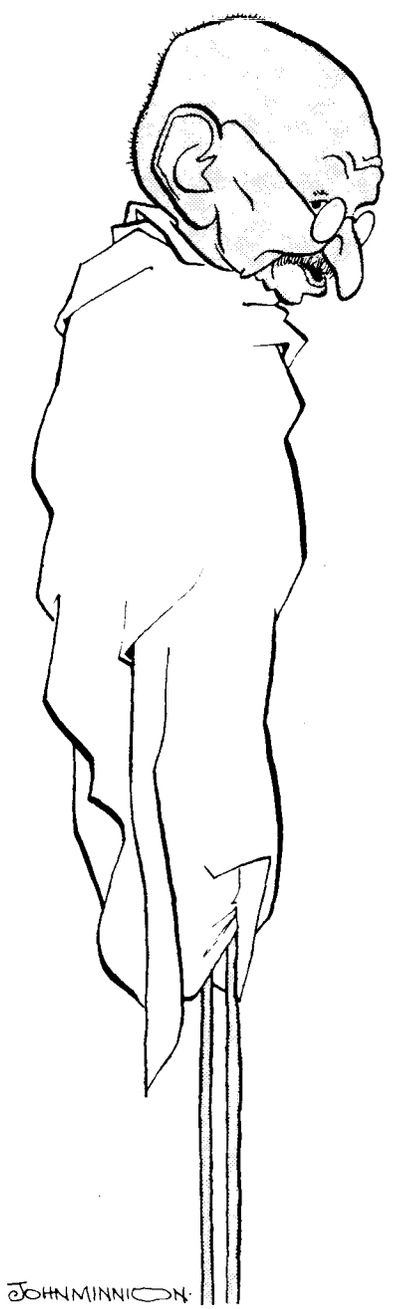
India's middle-class messiah

With support from the Indian government, Richard Attenborough has produced his epic film life of the Mahatma. Zareer Masani puts this addition to the Gandhi myth into historical perspective

THE CULT of Gandhi has had its share of ups and downs. Like Lenin, Mao and other messianic father-figures, the Indian Mahatma ('Great Soul') was canonised in his own lifetime, a hallowed symbol of political legitimacy even after his political writ had ceased to run. In Gandhi's case, the transformation of a once-powerful political dictator into a mystical and benevolent symbol of state ideology was aided by the essentially religious nature of his political appeal and the circumstances of his martyrdom. The post-independence years saw Gandhi given pride of place in a nationalist pantheon whose rites of worship were scarcely less elaborate than those of Hindu temple-deities. The only difference between the worship of Gandhi and that of Krishna was that it was officially practised and encouraged by the ostensibly secular Nehru government.

Under Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi, these ritual obsequies to the Mahatma became rare. Though not above playing on the coincidence of surnames, Mrs Gandhi's propaganda machine concentrated on the dynastic cult of the Nehru-Gandhis – the political succession of Sanjay and now Rajiv Gandhi traced back to their Nehru ancestry. The neglected mantle of the Mahatma was left to Mrs Gandhi's opponents, in the Gandhian 'Total Revolution' of J. P. Narayan, which precipitated the Emergency, and the Gandhian puritanism of Morarji Desai, who led the post-Emergency Janata government. Now that even these Gandhian veterans have vanished from the scene, Indian references to Gandhi would be far more likely to evoke the Prime Minister's heir-apparent, Rajiv, or her factious daughter-in-law, Maneka, than the 'Father of the Nation'.

Why, then, the official resurrection of the Mahatma's ghost, represented by the Indian government's patronage of Richard Attenborough's film and the massive publicity build-up? Indira Gandhi's involvement in the Attenborough project dates back 20 years to its inception, but it was only after her return to power in 1980 that she threw her weight fully behind it, helped clear the bureaucratic hurdles in Attenborough's way and authorised the crucial government investment of £2.5 million, without which the film could not have secured international finance. By this time, J. P. Narayan, the Mahatma's political heir and Mrs Gandhi's arch-opponent, was dead, and the few surviving, first-generation Gandhians were in the political wilderness. With the passing of Gandhi's apostles, the legend, in an uncontroversial, authorised version, could now



be trusted to promote rather than subvert the image of Indira Gandhi's India.

To make quite sure, Mrs Gandhi vetted the screenplay herself, as part of her bedtime reading, and saw the film before final exciting. In his book on the making of *Gandhi*, Attenborough, who admits enthusiastically to being 'devoted' to Indira Gandhi, can find no higher praise than her certificate of authenticity. Attenborough's epic, in a dubbed, Hindi version, will soon be widely seen in India by a generation to whom the living Gandhi is as nebulous a memory as the Raj itself and the Gandhi they see will be a character as mythical and one-dimensional as the depictions of Rama, Krishna and other Hindu epic heroes in popular Indian cinema. The only difference is that Attenborough's hero owes more to New Testament assumptions of good and evil than to the robust antics of Hindu gods and goddesses.

THE WESTERN appropriation of Gandhi as a sanitised, Christ-like missionary is neither recent nor entirely spurious. Gandhi himself encouraged such associations in the course of his flirtations with Christianity and his close links with British Anglicans, Quakers, theosophists, vegetarians and pacifists. His pretensions to saintliness, however, were taken less seriously by Britain's more experienced colonial administrators, and with good reason. Christian ethics were only one strand of the eclectic, eccentric and entirely pragmatic political mish-mash which came to be known as Gandhism. The current spate of Gandhiana in the western media, with its bland acceptance of the Mahatma as an Indian Messiah moving inexorably towards a pre-determined goal, is an essentially Eurocentric simplification.

Gandhi himself was fond of saying: 'Consistency is the virtue of an ass,' and that was certainly one virtue of which no one could accuse him. His particular brand of non-violence, his chief claim to sainthood, demonstrates how his fundamentalism always gave way to political expediency. Originating as an entirely pragmatic tactic for challenging South African pass laws, Gandhian passive resistance under the name of *satyagraha* or 'the path of truth', quickly became an organised religion with its own ritual and priesthood. Its religious rationale lay partly in the Christian concept of original sin and partly in orthodox Hindu rites of self-purification through self-inflicted suffering and renunciation. The curse of imperialism, like that of caste pollution, was to be expiated by ritual penance. The cult of *satyagraha*, so defined, rapidly grew to embrace strict vegetarianism, sexual abstinence, the wearing and ritual spinning of *khaddar* (home-spun cloth) and sundry other purifying tests which Gandhi thought up along the way.

But underlying all this was a shrewd political rationale. By making passive resistance a magical ritual, closely identified with orthodox Hinduism, Gandhi both secured its hold on the popular Hindu imagination and his own status as its supreme wizard and pontiff. Ranging from individual acts of purification, such as fasting, to mass direct

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action in the form of civil disobedience, *satyagraha* became one of the most exquisite forms of political blackmail ever devised. For all the rhetoric of non-violence, its chief sanction was the threat of violence, self-inflicted or otherwise; and it was a double-edged sword in Gandhi's hands. He used it to pressurise the Raj with the unspoken threat of potential mass violence, as on the many occasions that he embarked on 'fasts unto death'.

Gandhian *satyagraha*, with its populist appeal, certainly marked an advance on the sterile constitutionalist lobbying of the past. But the basis of its mass appeal remained religious rather than political or economic. Gandhi's economic thought never developed beyond a Utopian form of agrarian revivalism which blamed the evils of modern science and technology for economic oppression, while exonerating India's feudal and propertied classes.

Gandhi himself, despite his peasant attire and revivalism, belonged to the same urban, western-educated middle class as the rest of India's nationalist élite. The product of a *bania* (merchant-caste) family who were the semi-hereditary prime ministers of a princely state, he remained till the end a close ally of big business houses like the Birlas, who financed the Congress and his various other projects. His concept of trusteeship recognised feudal landlords, big business and even the princes as legitimate trustees of the nation's wealth and outlawed any talk of expropriation. His own campaigns on behalf of the under-privileged were not directed against their Indian oppressors, only against British capitalists and landlords. The cause for which he is best remembered, the uplift of Untouchables, never went beyond symbolic gestures. Gandhi re-named them *Harijans* or 'Children of God' and duly worshipped them; but he rejected their own efforts to organise politically, ignored the economic causes of their poverty and landlessness and even defended the Hindu caste system as an ideal division of labour, once purged of the taboo of untouchability.

Gandhi's conservatism was epitomised by his use of the gospel of non-violence to justify collaboration with the Raj against those who challenged the social and economic status quo. Whenever his civil disobedience campaigns threatened to pass out of his own control into the hands of the left, Gandhi terminated them on the ground that violence was creeping in. Though none of his three main campaigns won any tangible concessions from the Raj, Gandhi's rhetoric succeeded in presenting political defeat as moral victory and in endorsing a return to constitutionalist politics. In 1936, the Congress, with Gandhi's blessings, contested elections and formed provincial ministries under a constitution it had sworn to wreck. Predictably, the Congress ministries proved scarcely more sympathetic to economic reform than their loyalist predecessors, and the conservatism of their labour and agrarian legislation reassured even the British governors. While Gandhi condemned socialist organisation on class lines as inconsistent with non-violence, he defended the use of state repression, including police firing, by Congress ministries against labour and peasant demonstrations. In 1939, when the left under Subhas Bose came near to winning the Congress leadership, Gandhi was not above using the most ruthless pressure-tactics to oust Bose as Congress President and hound him out of Congress.

IN RETROSPECT, the most negative aspect of Gandhi's legacy was the political tokenism and hypocrisy legitimised by his cult of poverty and his glorification of individual renunciation. As one of his more irreverent disciples remarked, it cost a lot to keep the Mahatma in poverty. His insistence on 3rd class rail travel meant that a whole carriage had to be reserved for him, while his dietary and other fads meant that only the very rich could afford to have him as a house-guest. The fetishes, which seemed forgiveable eccentricities in Gandhi himself, became a calculated hypocrisy with future generations of Congressmen. In India today, a spotless Gandhi-cap and khaddar uniform are far more likely to evoke the whited sepulchres of Congress corruption and intrigue than any commitment to non-violence.

The worst of the current, bowdlerised Gandhi myth is that its simplistic eulogy obscures the most relevant feature of Gandhi's political testament – his final disillusionment with and rejection of the new political establishment he had fathered. If Gandhi was a hero, he reached tragic heights in the despair and isolation of his final months, just when his mission appeared to have been fulfilled. The personal tragedy of seeing most of his family reduced to neurotics and alcoholics by his own oppressiveness was mirrored in the carnage which shattered his dream of Hindu-Muslim unity in an undivided India. Watching the creation of Pakistan, followed by the first Indo-Pakistan war in Kashmir, Gandhi could not fail to be aware that his Hindu-orientated, religious nationalism had contributed more than anything else to the alienation of the Muslim élite, led by Jinnah, from their previous Congress allegiance; while his social conservatism had barred efforts by the left to organise the Hindu and Muslim masses on a secular, class platform.

Gandhi's final months were also embittered by the knowledge that British withdrawal was not the result of successful *satyagraha*, but a pragmatic retreat from the impracticality of governing an increasingly violent and chaotic sub-continent, especially after the Indian naval mutiny of 1946. Disgusted by the scramble for office among power-hungry Congress politicians, and increasingly ignored by Nehru and other Congress leaders he had groomed, Gandhi took refuge in an anarchistic rejection of the new Congress Raj. He now turned to J. P. Narayan and his former socialist critics for consolation and advocated the dissolution of the Congress political machine, or else its conversion into a social welfare organisation. If he felt so betrayed by the false dawn of independence, one does not need to guess how 'the spirit of Gandhi' would have rebelled against those other Gandhis of today, with their sordid family intrigues, becoming the official custodians of his shrine. □

EDUCATION 1

Everyone's right to learn

Phillip Whitehead and Rosaleen Hughes defend Labour's education proposals

THE EARLY RESPONSE to Labour's discussion paper on 18-plus education[1] was typical of the priorities which it seeks to challenge and change: much sound and fury about the precious rights of Oxford and Cambridge to do as they please, little on the real radical thrust of the document. We seek to reverse this unconscious elitism which governs our national priority about who gets what in further education. Even for the qualified 18-year-old, our 'age participation ratio' in high education is one of the worst in the western world.

But it is in provision for those who do not continue in full-time education after 18 that our performance is worst. It is in arguing for access for this group that we hope to win back the high ground in the battle for educational expansion, as we never can in the trench warfare of 'A' level points and the siege of 'centres of excellence'.

We assert a new principle of access – to replace the Robbins principle based upon entry to the qualified – as our response to those who have eviscerated Robbins by an arbitrary raising of academic qualification levels. All full- and part-time post school education should be available to those who wish to take up appropriate courses designed to meet their needs. Without restriction of age, this would allow the potential student to enter (or return to) education at the point and at the pace of learning suitable to them, subject to counselling. Such a proposal involves a major widening of financial support beyond the predominantly 'high education' courses which carry it today.

The scheme involves a two-stage move to a general educational entitlement. In the interim stage, support would be extended by the conversion of discretionary awards to mandatory status; by the abolition of the present discrimination in fee calculation against part-time students; and by the extension of paid educational leave for short courses and the introduction of a form of assisted educational leave (accumulated over time and with statutory back-up) for longer courses open to those at work. Unions are already negotiating for the former; the latter will extend rights of accumulation, and negotiated support, in all employer/trade union negotiations.

The 'general entitlement' is the second change – embracing a right for the whole adult population and not only those at work, or proceeding smoothly to full-time study at 18. It would be for up to a complete aca-

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demic year of full-time education, with needs-related support, which could be taken as a series of short courses or as, for example, a foundation year preparatory to degree-level work. The priority would be placed squarely with those for whom the present system does least. Some of our critics have suggested, on a misreading of the latest figures from the Advisory Council on Adult and Continuing Education, that this is a doomed initiative because Labour supporters are not interested in it. In fact ACACE's latest researches[2] show 22 per cent of adult population see themselves as 'very likely' to take up an entitlement personally.

We take a 10-year view of the introduction of an entitlement and envisage that by 1993 there would be at least 1.3 million people over the age of 18 involved in full-time further education. Inevitably, the cry will be one of cost, coming loudest from those who have pushed the defence budget £3 billion ahead of education in the life-time of this Parliament. We see the mounting public expenditure on unproductive unemployment, and the need for this nation to renew its skills and provide for a population whose life – in work and leisure alike – will be subject to many changes. And we ask what the cost of *non-provision* will be. If Labour's economic strategy is to work, the role of education in expanding our productive capacity and our social fulfilment alike will be crucial. The entitlement ought to be one of the cornerpieces of any forthcoming Labour manifesto and one upon which all sections and tendencies of the party could agree. □

The authors are members of the working party that produced the discussion document.

1. *Education After 18: Expansion with Change*. £1.25 from the Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, SE17 1JT.
2. *Adults: Their Educational Experience and Needs*. £2.50 from ACACE, 19b De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE.

THIS ENGLAND

£3 book tokens for entries printed (on postcards, please).

□ Authorities at Oxford University drew a veil, with a certain paternal regret, around the Thatcher's Restaurant affair last week. The general theme being aired around the colleges was that smashing up a country hotel during a drunken spree was something one grew out of, given time and patience, on the way to becoming prime minister or chairman of a decent bank. – *Sunday Times* (P. Rocho)

□ It was presumably in furthering his understanding of the more vulnerable sections of the British establishment that Mr Andropov became an admirer, so it is said, of the works of Oscar Wilde. – *Daily Telegraph* (R. E. Morrow)

□ Lord Wheatley, the Lord Justice Clerk, said reports showed that Mrs Stevenson needed support and help in a structured atmosphere, and in prison she would get a great deal of assistance and help. – *Guardian* (G. Bowman)

□ A bid to get a street on a new housing development named after a dead cat has failed. – *Oxford Mail* (A.Summers)

LOW PAY

No end of a dispute

As the NHS dispute enters its make-or-break week, Francis Wheen listens to the views of health workers

NEXT WEEK the health workers' dispute – the longest major pay dispute since the war – may turn into an all-out strike; or (as seems more likely) it may come to an end, with the TUC's health services committee accepting that nothing further can be gained.

How has this extraordinarily protracted dispute affected the health workers themselves? Last week I visited the huge complex of buildings which house the Manchester Royal Infirmary and the St Mary's maternity hospital (the latter was 'opened by Her Majesty the Queen, 24 June 1971', as a plaque in the hall proudly announces). The architecture of this complex is like the health dispute itself – long and sprawling, with pockets of activity connected by seemingly interminable corridors.

Jerry, a porter in the pathology department, has worked at St Mary's for 10 years. As a loyal NUPE member he had been evangelically active during the dispute, but he agreed that other staff had been less ready to participate. Many of the auxiliary staff 'agreed with what we were doing but didn't want to go on strike. As it went on, they felt more enthusiastic but still didn't want to come out. But they did come out in the end.'

Jerry had been heartened by the amount of support shown on the national Day of Action on 22 September, but equally disheartened by the course of events since then. 'Towards the end I did feel a bit gloomy. I felt that everyone was against us. We didn't expect it to go on so long.'

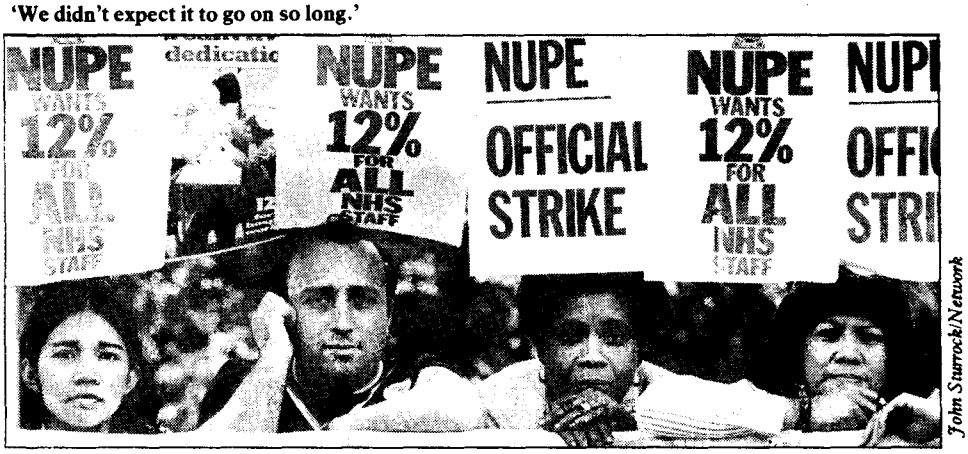
Veronica and Neil, who work in the catering department, are also NUPE members. They, too, had been optimistic in the early months of the dispute, encouraged by the packed union meetings and the support 'on the streets'. But they criticised the health unions for allowing the euphoria of 22 September to be dissipated in sporadic 'regional days of action': 'I think mainly people were a bit fed up with the one-day strikes, they wanted an all-out strike.' Veronica and Neil pointed out that the hospital's NUPE branch had voted last week to accept Norman Fowler's offer of a 6 per cent pay rise for this year, but not to accept the proffered 4½ per cent rise for next year. Since Fowler insists that the two parts of the offer are inseparable, it is hard to know how NUPE's executive will interpret this vote (which has been repeated by NUPE branches elsewhere). By refusing to accept next year's 4½ per cent, the St Mary's NUPE members have apparently voted to continue the dispute; yet they have also voted to end it, by accepting 6 per cent for the present. Veronica and Neil have no doubt about the meaning of the vote: 'There won't be an all-out strike now. It'll go quiet. But it will start again next year.'

THIS READINESS to resume battle next year is shared by Christine, Ann, Kath and Denise, who work in the finance department at Manchester Royal Infirmary. Their job is to organise the payment of wages and salaries to the hospital's staff: 'I think we felt so strongly about it because we're in a position to know how much everyone receives. Domestics are lucky to come out with £50 a week.' Ann adds that she and her colleagues are not too badly off themselves: 'Even as clerical workers, we're higher grades. So we're laughing really.'

Christine, Ann, Kath and Denise are all in NALGO, but until recently they were rather reluctant members. 'Until this year I wasn't at all active,' Ann says, 'I think I was probably anti-union. Then we were told 4 per cent and no ACAS and nothing, and we went to the union meeting and said we'd go on strike.'

All four of them went to London on 22 September for the national day of action – 'it was fantastic,' Christine says. But like other workers at the hospitals they felt the campaign had fizzled out after that. 'We knew these days of action would do no good,' adds Ann. 'The only thing would be an all-out strike, but the government knows

'We didn't expect it to go on so long.'



John Sturrock/Network

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that health workers wouldn't vote for a strike. I think the government relied on the fact that people are used to it, used to low pay and only having one day off a week.'

Christine agrees. 'A lot of them say they can't afford to go on strike. We go home at 4.30 and have weekends off. We're well off. We could afford to hold out longer.'

Even if the dispute does end next week, these women are glad of the experience. 'It's done a lot of good,' says Ann.

'We've made new friends,' Kath interjects.

Ann continues: 'Because we're in an office, I think some of the porters thought we were bosses. They were surprised when we turned up and voted for a strike.' Kath's main regret is that 'we didn't get involved in earlier years.'

The women also think that the general public ought to be more conscious of its own responsibility towards the National Health Service. 'I think it should be up to other industries to do something about it,' says Ann. 'It's their health service, and if they know health workers can't go on strike it should be up to them to do something to help us with strikes.'

UNION OFFICERS at the Manchester Royal Infirmary and St Mary's agree that the dispute lost impetus after September. 'The 22nd was a real day,' says George Maclean, an ASTMS shop steward, who works in the medical laboratory. 'We were buoyed up. But then over the next month everything slipped away. It was lost.'

The lesson is clear, he thinks: 'When you're faced with a government like this, a long drawn-out campaign over seven months is going to fritter away support. The danger is that people will look back at this long protracted campaign and say "I can't be bothered," and lose their enthusiasm. If they're going to fight, they want to be in the fight quickly.'

Both he and Stan Rupa, the NUPE area officer, agreed that the present dispute has achieved something. Most obviously, it has forced the government to raise its offer from 4 per cent to 6 per cent (even though this is still far from the original claim). At St Mary's and the Royal Infirmary, it has also led to the setting up of a Joint Shop Stewards Committee – still quite rare in the NHS – which 'will go on long after Norman Fowler has faded away.' Because of this JSSC, the hospitals' unions have managed to avoid some of the inter-union difficulties which have occurred elsewhere, such as elitism by white-collar unions and frictions between COHSE and NUPE. 'Even the people in the Royal College of Nursing are now becoming more trade unionised,' says Stan cheerfully. 'There is this slight change in attitude, particularly with student nurses.' Even so, he concedes that many RCN members at the two hospitals 'still say: "We're a special case, sod the rest of you".'

Nevertheless, George insists that 'gains have been made.' He lists them as follows: 'Contact has been made with other organisations and workers, people have had the experience of being on strike, shop stewards have built up regular contacts with their members.'

Like everyone else I spoke to, George had been impressed by the support for the health workers' cause. He could remember hardly any hostility: 'On the picket line we were collecting money and one person from the records office called out "Bloody well get back to work." But that was all. People were on our side.'

Workers at the hospitals seem convinced that, next time, support must be capitalised upon early, instead of being allowed to lapse. And in the view of many of them 'next time' may be soon. □

LABOUR PRESS

A very British coup

Patrick Wintour disentangles the legal and political manoeuvres behind *Tribune*

Chris Mullin

WHEN CHRIS MULLIN, the relatively new and relatively young editor of *Tribune*, decided to raise some capital for the paper by turning it into a friendly society, he produced a leaflet encouraging people to take up £5 shares. Along with various statutory derogatory references to Lord Harmsworth and the monopoly press, Mullin wrote the following words: 'You won't get rich with *Tribune*. If you want to make a killing, try British Telecom. But if you value a paper that cannot be nobbled by the establishment, why not invest in it?' Well now *Tribune* is being nobbled, not by the City establishment but by the Labour establishment.

Chris Mullin was elected in May. In many ways it is not a coveted post: salary £5,000, hours suicidal, resources minimal. Mullin had experience of the paper, having worked as one of the two journalists under the former editor Dick Clements for four years. As his divisions with Clements over Benn's campaign for Labour's deputy leadership deepened, Mullin increasingly found his copy jostling for space in the classified ads section. Not surprisingly, Clements did not want Mullin to succeed him. Three other candidates were short-listed, along with Mullin – Francis Beckett, a former President of the NUJ; Jim Mallory, the editor of the COHSE magazine; and *Tribune*'s business manager, Carl James.

The appointment is made by the board. At the time, this consisted of 11 people – three MPs, Neil Kinnock, Michael Meacher and John Garrett; Barrie Sherman, the Director of Research at ASTMS; Bernard Dix, the Assistant General Secretary of NUPE; James Curran, the editor of *New Socialist;* Dick Clements; and four members from the staff elected by the ominous-sounding Workers' Council. Mullin won with seven votes on the first ballot. He told the board of his plan for a friendly society to open up the paper's shareholding to readers during the interview.

There was some unease that the staff had been mandated by their 'Workers' Council' to vote as a block for Mullin, but no-one shouted foul. Soon afterwards, Kinnock resigned. Clements and Garrett followed later, though the staff asked Clements to stay. On to the board came Brian Murphy, the former TUC press officer and Jack Boddy, the General Secretary of the Agricultural Union in whose premises *Tribune* rented cheap space.

The vanquished Carl James also departed, but not before xeroxing details of the Articles of Association of Tribune Publications Limited.

MULLIN did not see the paper's role under his editorship as a fan club of the parliamentary Tribune Group. Indeed he went to the Group's first meeting after his election and told them politely that he was discontinuing Clements's practice of attending their meetings. He pointedly began an extra-parliamentary column. A hitherto unheard-of species – women – entered the pages of the paper. Above all, however, Mullin saw *Tribune*'s role as a watchdog against the 'fudgers, backsliders and stitch-up merchants', who, in Mullin's eyes, resided in the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Sometimes the formula has worked – for instance when *Tribune* revealed a document which showed that Derek Gladwin, the chairman of the Conference Arrangements Committee, saw it as his job to freeze out the Left. But, at other times, the paper has had an obsessive narrow and anti-intellectual tone. As one Tribune MP put it: 'Unless you are fully conversant with the party's affairs, the thing might as well be written in morse code.' John Silkin was more blunt at the Tribune meeting this week: '*Tribune* stinks', he said. He made no secret of the fact that he wanted Mullin sacked, or at least controlled.

Those who have been planning the coup against the Mullin regime – primarily John Silkin and Lord Bruce of Donnington – are being disingenuous at least. If Silkin thought the paper sectarian, he could have reintroduced some heterodoxy. On three occasions under Mullin's regime, the paper has written to Silkin, asking for contributions. No reply was received. Under Dick

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Clements' editorship Silkin even refused a request from the entire board of the paper to give *Tribune* an interview on Labour's defence policy – for which he is the Labour spokesman.

Similarly, if Lord Bruce thought the paper's finances were being poorly managed, the remedy was in his hands. He was a board director from 1973 and the Company Secretary throughout most of the 1970s – the failure to file accounts at Companies House, the failure to elect the directors at properly constituted AGMs developed under Lord Bruce's stewardship. Ironically on 23 July and 2 December 1980 Chris Mullin as board minute-taker, wrote to Lord Bruce pointing out his continued absence at board meetings and impressing upon him the need to have active directors. Lord Bruce finally resigned in 1981. Since the decision to set up a friendly society, the business manager, Jon Lansman, has been laboriously putting things back into order.

This week Lord Bruce told the *NS:* 'Just as it is not for the shareholders to intervene with editorial policy, so it is not for the journalists to interfere with the shareholding structure. A degree of reciprocity is needed.' Lord Bruce thinks it unacceptable that the shareholders were not consulted in advance about the friendly society plan. The Mullin group does appear to have been initially cavalier about the existing shareholders. But few shareholders were expected to object to the idea of bringing the paper into more 'public' ownership, especially when the exercise aimed to raise £20,000 for the paper.

In fact, the actual process of setting up a friendly society would inevitably have involved the existing shareholders such as Lord Bruce. The board is empowered to sell the assets of the company and had agreed in principle to sell the business to a specially formed friendly society at a valuation based on the end of year accounts. The company, Tribune Publications Ltd, would not itself be wound up but would lie dormant. However to ensure that the board is empowered legally to sell the company assets, the paper's solicitors, Seifert and Sedley, had advised that the directors needed to be elected at a properly constituted meeting of the shareholders. Under the companies Act, a third of the directors need to retire and be re-elected at the shareholders' AGM. In the case of *Tribune* there has been no AGM for a decade and hence no legally empowered directors. So the shareholders had to agree to the plan if the directors were to have the power to sell the company's assets.

One final point. Lord Bruce says his motto as a *Tribune* shareholder was to leave well alone if things were running smoothly – the implication being that the financial state of the company had significantly deteriorated under Mullin's editorship. In truth circulation has stabilised whilst the plan to set up a friendly society seems to be the first serious attempt to put the company on a sound footing for over a decade. Lord Bruce is using the friendly society plan as a lever to remove an editor that is not to his political taste. It is, in short, a very British coup. □

AGRICULTURE

Fat of the land

British farming is successful – thanks to massive public funds which should have gone to industry says a Tory farming MP. Alf Morris reports.

A VERY STRANGE thing happened last Thursday. For the first time ever, a Tory MP put the case for public ownership of agricultural land in a devastating attack on the vast and publicly-created new fortunes of Britain's 100,000 landowners.

Even stranger is the fact that the attack comes not from one of Mrs Thatcher's new breed of hard-headed (and harder faced) urban supporters at Westminster, but from a Tory MP whose constituency has more farms than any other MP and who is one of his party's only five nominees on the Commons Select Committee on Agriculture.

He is Richard Body, a farmer and stockbreeder and a judge at the Royal Agricultural Show. He sits for the quaintly named Holland-with Boston division of Lincolnshire and his attack on the wholly unmerited new wealth of Britain's agricultural landowners comes in a book, published last week, which should astonish its readers.

No one should be put off by the title of the book: *Agriculture – The Triumph and The Shame**. After all, agriculture claims to be our biggest industry. Richard Body suggests that is the clue to why things have gone so very badly wrong with the economy.

Britain's other industries, more particularly manufacturing, have suffered since the war from a severe shortage of new capital. Too many of them have failed to modernise, to invest in research and development or to streamline methods of production. The failure has been due not to a workforce that is strike-happy, indolent and prone to restrictive practices, but to a shortage of cash.

Richard Body's thesis is that, however much capital may be available for investment at any one time, there is always a limit; that choices have to be made about where it should be invested; and that capital which ought to have gone to other industries has been diverted to agriculture.

Since 1946, the owners of agricultural land (not necessarily the same people as our farmers) have become richer by £40 billion, the same amount as the Ministry of Agriculture's expenditure on farming subsidies over the same period. Every penny of that money has been diverted from other industries. The process is not just continuing, but actually increasing.

Of the 100,000 owners of agricultural land, each on average is richer by £400,000 after making every allowance for inflation. Blessed are the landowners among those on whom the Common Market confers its favours. The Treasury has also shown warm benevolence towards landowners.

The millionaire can avoid capital transfer tax altogether, provided he buys a farm. The tax allowances are so favourable that the average farmer *owner* pays only 15 per cent of his income in tax. That is the same as the average farm *worker*, although more than one-third of farm workers are poor enough to qualify for Family Income Supplement.

Body does not deny the technical triumph of British agriculture. An area the size of Lancashire, Yorkshire, Durham and Northumberland combined, previously uneconomic for the growing of cereals, has been brought into arable cultivation. Productivity has increased more than in any other substantial industry, so that one person now produces food enough for 42.

Between 1954 and 1981, the yield of wheat to the acre increased by 98 per cent, barley by 62 per cent and sugar by 23 per cent. The average dairy cow produces 48 per cent more milk and the hen 52 per cent more eggs.

Technically that is triumph indeed. But it has been achieved at a shameful cost. The consumer is worse off by £3 billion a year. That is the difference (about £5 a week per family) between the price of food on the world market and in the EEC. How many British consumers realise that the tax on imported wheat is now nearly 100 per cent?

Yet the worst of the shame is the cost exacted from Third World countries. Their hungry millions are made remorselessly poorer by our selfishness in not buying more of their exports.

Over recent months, because of the massive dumping of heavily subsidised beet sugar grown in the EEC, the world price of sugar has fluctuated between £80-£100 a ton. The cost of producing cane sugar in Guyana, traditionally among the most efficient producers in the Commonwealth, is *£230 a ton.*

A third of Guyana's total sugar production has had to be sold at a loss on the world market and, in consequence, imports of wheat can no longer be afforded. Guyana cannot even afford adequate drug supplies for its sick and disabled.

The subsidy to beet sugar producers in the EEC is now £235 a ton. That is more than the total cost of production in Guyana and inflicts preventable suffering not only there, but on many other Third World countries.

Richard Body's book is a bombshell. It challenges all accepted wisdom about agricultural policy and advances an entirely new explanation of why, for the first time since the Tudors, Britain's exports of manufactured goods are now exceeded by our imports.

Once in a while a book appears that raises fresh issues in politics, one that has an important impact on opinion. I may be wrong. But, especially in view of its source, I think this may well be one of those books. □

* Published by Temple Smith, £2.95.

Alf Morris is MP for Manchester Wythenshawe.

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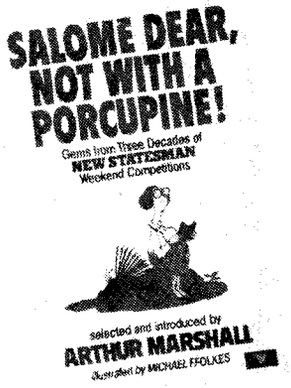
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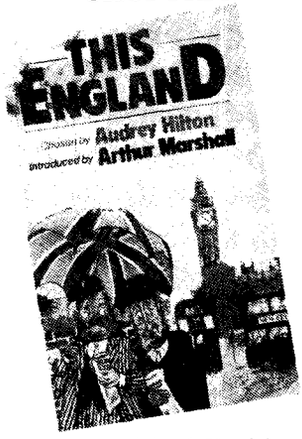

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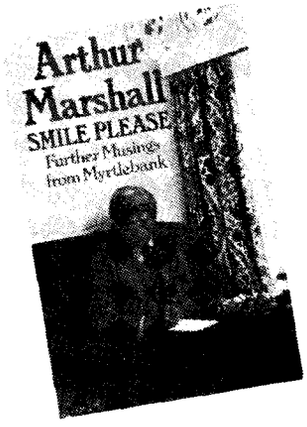

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EDUCATION 2

Inequality before the law

Next year, children with 'special educational needs' will be assessed under a new Act. Freda Edis and Zena Brabazon argue that the new law will undermine parents' fundamental rights

DESPITE a lack of public awareness and a series of bureaucratic delays, an Act is about to come into force that will affect, potentially, 20 per cent of the nation's children. The 1981 Education Act (which becomes law in spring '83) is the Government's response to the Warnock Committee's recommendations on special educational provision for children with learning difficulties.

One of the apparent intentions of the Act is to strengthen the parents' role in the assessment of their children – an essential component of the educative process, supported by this statement in the Warnock Report: 'The successful education of children with special educational needs is dependent upon the full involvement of their parents; indeed, unless the parents are seen as equal partners in the educational process the purpose of our report will be frustrated.'[1] Interested professionals have assumed that the Act embodies this intention. Our detailed study, however, reveals that parents' civil liberties are going to be minimal – while the civil liberties of children are not considered at all.

Equal partnership means different things to different people. For professionals, equal partnership means the right to refer children, to assess children, to see and compile all records and statements and, finally, to determine a child's educational future. Equality for parents means the right only to be informed by the local authority of its decision to refer, assess and place the child in special educational provision. It is only after the process is complete that parents can challenge the local authority's decision and the subsequent placement of their children. The Act institutionalises this fundamental inequality.

The Act is likely to work in the following manner. The local authority will determine whether a child over two should be assessed. At this stage, parents cannot refuse permission for the assessment to take place. Non-compliance leaves them liable to a £50 fine. Parents themselves can request an assessment but the authority can refuse if the request 'is in their opinion unreasonable'.[2] It is clear from this very earliest stage that parents have subordinate roles in planning and decision-making. The pattern is repeated throughout the legislation.

Once assessment procedures are in motion, parents have no statutory right to see any of the medical, educational and social records which are maintained, and being gathered, by the local authority. These records form the basis of the proposed statement of educational need. The parents can meet with the local authority representatives to discuss the contents of the proposed statement but they have no statutory right to modify or reject it. The same applies to the final statement – and it is only at this stage that the parents have any right of appeal, initially to the local authority and, if all that fails, to the Secretary of State for Education.

Even at the stage of appeal, parents' rights are restricted – the parents have no right of appeal to an independent arbitration process. The appeals process is contained within the education system and parents may not challenge the composition of the local authority's and Secretary of State's appeals committee, nor, at the appeals stage, may they have their own representatives. In fact, the only time parents have the statutory right to a 'representative' is after the completion of a statement by the authority. But this representative – the 'named person' – is not an arbitrator between the parent and the authority. He or she is likely to be a local authority employee, there only to advise the parents on the child's special need, a need previously determined by the same authority's experts.

To perceive the 'named person' as being the parents' advocate is patently incorrect. This part of the legislation, then, leaves the parents without objective representation. Even the most articulate are bound to be affected and those who are less articulate will find it practically impossible to disagree with the authority's decision.

ONCE the authority has decided that special educational provision is required, what can the parents do? Besides entering the lengthy appeals procedure, very little. Parents have no right to refuse special education, wherever that is provided – in special schools or in ordinary schools with appropriate resources. They can only assert their opposition by refusing to send their children to school, thus breaking school attendance regulations.

All of this applies to the 18 per cent not yet determined to be in need of special education provision. For a transitional year after the Act is in force, the 25 per cent of children currently receiving special provision will be presumed to have been assessed and the parents have no rights to remove their children from existing placements, no right of appeal against the arrangement and no right to request an assessment. This means that the children in existing special schools cannot be moved for a year to the ordinary school which has appropriate resources to cope. It is ironic that an Act, one of the objects of which is to facilitate the integration of special needs children into ordinary schools, should so obviously exclude the 165,000[3] currently receiving special educational treatment in special schools and classes across England and Wales. For the parents of these children, even the spurious equality afforded under the Act will be denied for a further year.

The Act has been drawn up in such a way as to exclude the provision of any additional expenditure by central government or local authorities. It is only an enabling act. Once in operation, implementation is likely to be sporadic throughout the country – given that local authorities will have to reallocate and reorganise resources within their existing budgets. The implication is clear: in those education authorities where there is goodwill towards the integration of special needs children into mainstream schools an attempt will be made to carry it through; where there is no goodwill there will be no implementation over and above legal requirements.

In seeking to replace the old categories of handicap with the new one of 'special needs children' the intention of the Act is that children will attend ordinary schools with resources to cope. However, integration of special needs children cannot be done without money. Teaching staff, aides, special equipment and building modifications will be necessary if the quality of education is to be maintained. Only then can a discussion about the 'efficient use of resources'[4], as quoted in the Act, take place. In the present era of educational cutbacks neither investment nor discussions are likely to occur.

We can only assume that the government is being Janus-faced. How can parents be equal partners with local authorities in making decisions about their children's educational future when the law actually *prevents* them from doing so? How can willing local authorities implement the Act and make an effort to have parents as equal partners when educational resources are not forthcoming? While some parents will inevitably be locked into confrontation with the local authorities, and others will not have the confidence to challenge the law, the government will continue to congratulate itself on having introduced a piece of 'far-sighted' legislation.

We need to restate that parents have no real part to play under this Act. Their contribution depends on tenacity, willingness to fight for their rights and a belief in their children's educational capacity. Parents are being forced to assume a submissive role in deciding their children's future, while the judgements of experts in education are being reinforced by statute.

There is a clear need for a child advocacy system which will support parents in their challenge against established interest groups and enhance their civil rights. Unlike comparable legislation in the USA[5], which explicitly recognises the civil rights of both parents and children, this British law superficially reinforces the tradition of individual liberty, at the same time containing it by institutional and financial controls. □

1. The Warnock Report, Chapter 9.
2. 1981 Education Act, Section 9, Sub-section 1.
3. DES Circular 8/81.
4. 1981 Education Act, Section 2, Sub-section 3, Part C.
5. Public Law 94-142.

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DIARY

Christopher Price

Anyone who thinks that Mrs Thatcher still has a rapport with her audience, should have been present at the Information Technology 82 Conference at the Barbican this week. She used the occasion to impose on an earnest technocratic audience a blatantly party political speech which failed to come to grips with any of the crucial issues of employment and data protection which must be solved before any substantial advance in the new technology can be welcomed by socialists. On her credit side, she had one victory. It is unusual to find a real Belgian Viscount totally insecure and grovelling in the presence of a mere middle-English grocer's daughter, but Etienne Davignon, Commissioner for Information Technology in Europe, even clapped, when instructed by her to do so. When the Prime Minister left, the discussion became a little more realistic, and Roger Darlington of the Post Office Engineering Union actually mentioned the word monetarism. The truth about Information Technology Year is that none of the big companies has been willing to bite. In the old days the wealth-creating industries also created jobs. They don't any more and until there's some deal between the new wealth creators and the existing unemployed, there'll be little investment in Britain to match the US and the Japanese.

○

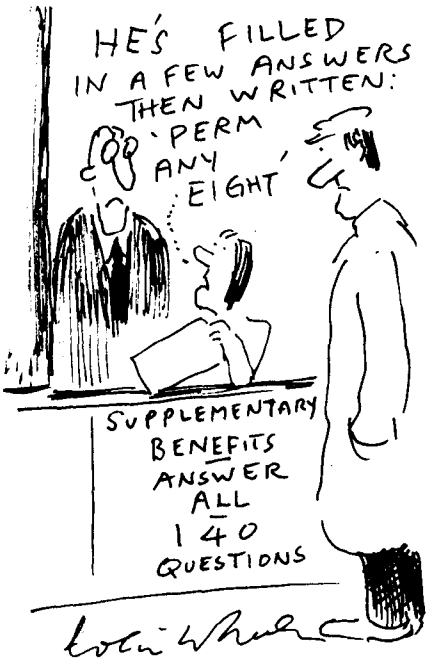
Hypocrisy still abounds in the reaction of both political parties towards the media. Some Tories are having a little moan about Channel 4, alleging four letter words, but really simply sore that their pet hate Willie Whitelaw allowed those well-known socialists, Jeremy Isaacs and his friends, to organise the Channel. Since the ratings of some programmes are too small to be statistically significant, I can't see what they're worrying about. The audience seems to consist of little more than Mrs Whitehouse and John Carlisle – the member for Luton West, purity in TV and South Africa. Similarly, Labour must take care not to appear too Mrs Grundy-ish in its attitude to cable TV. We have a responsibility to tip the scales towards quality and against triviality, and to keep commercial interests with licences to print money under the strictest control. But having done that, we should avoid the temptation to substitute our cultural judgment for that of our constituents. Our job is to offer them a decent *à la carte* menu, not a turgid, predictable *table d'hôte*.

○

I have the feeling that some parliamentary scrutiny of the security services creeps a little nearer, with each new revelation about the inefficiency of the system in dealing with the Russians and its increasing efficiency in interfering with democracy at home. Members of the Labour Left and many trade unionists have long been aware that they are targets of surveillance; now Plaid Cymru is getting concerned. Dafydd Wigley, who recently complained of the bugging of one of his local public phone kiosks, has put down a motion on the Order Paper entitled 'Use of Public Money to Spy on Constitutional Political Parties', citing the *NS*, Duncan Campbell and Directorate K of MI5. Meanwhile Michael English has been pressing his point that there is nothing stopping existing Select Committees inquiring into the security services, and the Defence Committee have responded by having a go at Positive Vetting. Though Mrs Thatcher may continue to block any debate on the subject on the floor of the House, select committees are a useful interim instrument to keep up the pressure. My own Education Committee is looking into 'Public Records' and got Lord Denning last week to leak some interesting reflections on Profumo. The great advantage of these committees is that they are not subject to the conventional 'block' by the Table Office which makes it impossible to ask a Parliamentary Question about almost anything connected with security.

○

The marathon committee stage of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill begins this week, and I am a willing conscript. This



show will run and run, every Tuesday and Thursday. We begin with stop and search – the most potentially explosive increase in police powers within the Bill. There are meant to be two safeguards. First, the conditions of 'stop and search' are to be made statutory in tiny detail, down to the clothes you can and can't be asked to take off in public. (Overcoats, jackets and gloves, yes; anything else, no.) Second, the police are meant to record every stop and search in detail – but, as usual, there's a let out. There *might* be circumstances, says the Home Office note, where it is not reasonably practicable to make a written record of each search. Like football matches, they say. Or political demonstrations? Clause after clause – seeing a solicitor, being kept without charge in a police station – seems at first to be absolute, until you get to the '*except when the police think it unwise*' exception. It is the policing of these exceptions that will provide much of the discussion in committee.

○

Unlike most of my colleagues in the Commons, I find these standing committees, scrutinising legislation line by line, worthwhile. In opposition, at any rate. It's a bore for the backbench Tories, who are expected to sit there for months on end, opening their post, keeping their mouths shut and voting as they're told from time to time. Just occasionally, they get so bored with it all that they vote against their own side. I managed to persuade a couple of Tories to do this last year on the Contempt of Court Bill, when we passed a clause allowing journalists to bring tape recorders into court. Though the government partially reversed it, enough remained to convince our idiosyncratic Leeds coroner, Philip Gill, to allow the Helen Smith inquest to be separately recorded by the journalists present. I hope a similar request goes in at every important trial or inquest. These little concessions die of inanition, unless made a habit through constant use; and it's so much less tiring than shorthand.

ROGER WODDIS

Have bucks, will travel

'He is a man of great personal integrity totally dedicated to democracy . . . Frankly, I'm inclined to believe that they've been given a bum rap.' – President Reagan, after meeting the Guatemalan dictator, General Efraim Rios Montt.

Oh, give me a land
Where they eat from my hand,
Where the good guys are winning the day;
Where the baddies are those
Who wear shoes without toes,
And the peasants are glad of their pay.

Home, home is a place
Where the eagle is aimin' to stay;
Where seldom is heard
A disparaging word,
And the corpses are carried away.

Oh, I love every hair
Of my buddies down there,
Where the best of bananas are grown;
Where they know who to zapp,
And they get a bum rap
Just for acting the same as Capone.

Home, home's a place where
Democracia ends 'CIA';
Where contracts are won
By the guy with a gun
In the good old American way.

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America's dud missiles

Pershing II and Tomahawk cruise missiles – intended to undermine the European peace movement as much as to attack the USSR – can so far not land on target nor fly their intended range, reveals Claudia Wright

US PERSHING II and 'Tomahawk' cruise missiles are a paradox in the nuclear arms game at the moment. For the Soviets they represent 'first-strike' weapons that require Soviet missile retaliation on first detection of their firing – launch on warning, the new precipice in nuclear brinkmanship. But the missiles which the US and NATO intend to deploy next year are also, for the time being at least, duds.

Pershing II has failed to fly properly in four tests so far. Neither it nor the Tomahawk cruise missile has demonstrated that it can fly its intended range and land on target. After earlier tests of the Pershing II went wrong earlier this year, the Army managed to launch the rocket on 23 November for what was initially described as a 'good burn, good flight, good bird'. In fact, the distance covered was less than a quarter of the Pershing's 1,000-mile range and, as engineers ruefully admitted, the guidance system 'seized', causing the warhead to fall way off target.

Poor guidance has also been a problem in tests this year of the cruise missile, as well as what a Tomahawk project officer called 'quality assurance problems'. They cost the project director, Rear-Admiral Walter Locke, his job – on 12 August he was sacked.

The fact that neither weapon works, however, will not hold up the decision to deploy them in Britain, West Germany, and Italy next year. For the first target of these missiles is not the Soviet Union but the European disarmament movement. Having identified this as a Soviet 'front', President Reagan and NATO Secretary General Luns appear to think that the phoney deployments, if pushed through, will undermine the peace movements.

Meanwhile, the US is developing alternative missile systems that can be deployed beyond the reach of European disarmers. The alternatives include the submarine-fired and air-launched cruise missiles.

Pershing II and cruise missiles were developed to replace less accurate, shorter range, and more vulnerable Pershing I and bomber systems. They were also designed as a Western counter to Soviet intermediate range SS-20s targeted on Europe. The cruise missile, in particular, was intended to give NATO in Europe more 'flexible' options for responding to a Soviet attack, short of firing US-based Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) and other air and sea-launched strategic weapons. It was Europe's insurance policy against a last-second loss of nerve in Washington that might hold the Americans back from armageddon in Europe.

The Soviets haven't seen it this way. They regard the cruise missile as a new type of first-strike weapon, better able to penetrate Soviet defences than manned bombers and more accurate than the older generation of ICBM's. They therefore argued during the SALT II negotiations for a restriction on the missile's range of 600 kilometres – limiting its attack capacity to a relatively small number of forward Soviet bases and military sites, but leaving the main population centres, headquarters and heartland of the Soviet Union out of reach. Both Ford and Carter administrations accepted this limitation, although there were many US and NATO officials who criticised it.

On of the bluntest critics was Group-Captain Roger Palin, a Royal Air Force officer, who wrote several papers on the cruise missile during leave in Washington in 1980. He is now Commanding officer of the RAF base at Wildenrath, West Germany.

Palin was keen on removing the range limitations on the cruise missile so as to 'provide less suicidal options for both first and initial use of nuclear weapons'. That sounds like a recommendation for a weapon with 'first-strike' capacity. This was certainly the picture of the cruise missile which US planners described in *Fiscal Year 1984-1988 Defense Guidance*, a secret strategy document issued in March by US Defense Secretary, Caspar Weinberger. This discusses a strategy of 'decapitation' strikes aimed at eliminating the Soviet leadership in its headquarters. If that can't be done at a single blow, the document discusses the option of waging nuclear war with the Russians 'through a protracted conflict period'.

The current estimated range for the Tomahawk missile is 2,500 kms. According to Palin, it should be aimed at 'heavily defended fixed targets of high value' – targets like Soviet missile sites and Command Headquarters that would be almost impossible for bomber crews to hit, even if they adopted Kamikaze tactics. Weinberger's 'defense guidance' makes a similar point.

As a bargaining ploy, NATO deployment of the ground-launched cruise missile – intended for December 1983 – is supposed to persuade the Soviets to withdraw and

Tomahawk cruise missile trying to spot the difference between Iran and Iraq

Camera Press

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dismantle their SS-20's. If that happened, US and NATO officials say, the cruise missile can be scrapped.

The problem is that the Reagan administration gives no sign that even if a swap of SS-20's for Tomahawks were to take place, it would scrap its plans for deploying the sea-launched and air-launched cruise missiles that are being developed simultaneously. In fact, the submarine-fired weapon is referred to in the 'defense guidance' as playing a major role in striking Soviet bases in Eastern Europe – Soviet defence against these seaborne missiles, the Pentagon document warns, will produce a US reaction that 'will not necessarily remain limited to the sea'.

By refitting the B-52G bomber, the Pentagon also plans to deploy the air-launch cruise missile, whatever the outcome of the European debates. With the extended range of both bomber and missile, these could be based as far away as Morocco, Egypt, or Diego Garcia, or as close as Eastern Turkey, where they could annihilate just about everything south of a line from Moscow to Sverdlosk. Submarines in the Norwegian sea or the Arctic Ocean could presumably take care of everything north of the line.

For the first time, each leg of the American 'nuclear triad', and each of the armed services – army, navy, air force – will have its own 'first strike' weapon. And, for each of these weapons, there are alternative bases outside Western Europe where they can be stationed with a minimum of local political resistance. It isn't difficult to see why the Kremlin is so jumpy about the cruise missile and so unready to trade the SS-20s away.

FOR THE MOMENT, however, the cruise missile is not quite so threatening – not yet. According to several partially-declassified studies by the US General Accounting Office (GAO), the failure of the missile's guidance system is particularly serious. The rocket is designed to fly very close to the ground to evade radar and ground defences. It is guided by on-board radar which looks down, collecting a picture of the surface and comparing it with pre-programmed contour maps.

According to the GAO reports, however, the system isn't working. Missile engineers say the trouble is not in faulty mapping of Soviet terrain, but the 'blackout' that the missile's computer appears to suffer when flying over desert terrain. It could cope best with the lush green forests of Germany, Czechoslovakia, or Lithuania, but when it must fly over yellow or gray terrain – characteristic of Kazakhstan or the Persian Gulf region – the missile's mind apparently wanders, and so does its flight path. No-one knows for certain whether the same aberration would occur on flights over featureless snow.

For the time being, therefore, the US and the Western alliance appear to have perfected a surprise nuclear attack system that could only be fired from Germany or Italy from late spring to midsummer. Using B-52's based outside Europe to launch them from the air, offers the Pentagon relief from both the political and guidance engineering problems inherent in the weapon. As Turkey has no democracy, resistance there to deployment is much less vocal than in Western Europe. From Turkish bases the bombers could also fly right up to the Soviet border to make sure that the Tomahawks did not detonate on NATO territory.

A spokesman for the Tomahawk project in Washington meant to be reassuring when he says that the guidance problems the missile is having are limited only to those armed with conventional explosive warheads: 'They are not significant for nuclear warheads.' For those in Europe who oppose their deployment at all, this is slight comfort. □

LIBYA

Planting plots

Reports in the British press of an attempted coup in Libya appear to be 'disinformation' in which the Foreign Office was the conduit, writes Alan George

A DEVELOPING RAPPROCHEMENT between Britain and Libya was threatened last week, when a Tripoli court imposed a 12-year jail sentence on Glasgow engineer Robert Maxwell for bribery and other alleged offences. But relations between the two countries had already been jeopardised two weeks earlier by what appeared to be Foreign Office involvement in the dissemination of false reports of an attempted coup against Colonel Gaddafi. A key, though unwitting, role in this incident was played by the diplomatic correspondents of major British dailies.

On 16 November the *Guardian, Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Mail* all carried reports that more than 100 Libyan army officers had been arrested in late October for planning to assassinate Gaddafi on his return from a visit to Peking. All three reports were by the papers' diplomatic correspondents, and all were strikingly similar.

The coup reports seem to have been completely without foundation, but the amount of detail they contained – the home town of some of those allegedly arrested, for example – suggests that considerable care had been taken in their fabrication, while their timing betrayed a clear political purpose. They appeared the day after Gaddafi addressed African Foreign Ministers assembled in Tripoli to prepare the agenda for the then upcoming summit of the Organisation of African Unity. Only days later, African heads of state were due in the Libyan capital. Evidently, the reports were calculated to cast doubt on Libya's internal security situation in a bid to dissuade African leaders from taking part in the summit, thereby depriving Colonel Gaddafi of the prestige of the OAU Chairmanship.

The Foreign Office, however, had no hesitation in passing them on to journalists. According to a Fleet Street source, the day the reports appeared the Foreign Office was 'readily confirming that there was substance to the story'. Presumably it would not have taken such a firm position except on the basis of a report from the British Embassy in Tripoli. Now, however, the Foreign Office adamantly denies any knowledge of a coup attempt.

The Foreign Office News Department provides extensive daily briefings privately to diplomatic correspondents. The fact that the Libya coup stories appeared simultaneously in three British dailies, and that all three were by diplomatic correspondents, in itself points to the Foreign Office as the source.

A possible explanation of the incident is that the reports were planted with British Embassy officials in Tripoli by opponents of Gaddafi and, as a matter of routine, relayed to the Foreign Office, where it was passed on to the press, who in turn – as is often the case with stories by diplomatic correspondents – published the story without bothering to check its authenticity.

Libya has been a frequent target of disinformation campaigns. In the event, Foreign Office officials speedily contacted the Libyan Embassy in London in a bid to avert friction. The Libyans chose to play down the affair, issuing a denial of the reports that did not mention the Foreign Office by name but expressed the view that the story had been put out 'at a single briefing meeting in London on the afternoon of Monday 15 November'. Noting that Britain and Libya were in the process of strengthening political and economic ties, the statement added: 'We deplore any attempt to undermine this effort, which is clearly against the interests of both countries'. □

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CHINA

Days of mindless mass are numbered

Jonathan Mirsky describes the start of a party purge

CHINESE POLITICAL purges have a scale and thoroughness unknown anywhere else. The way in which Party members polish off their adversaries is enough, as the saying goes, to make a thousand horses stand mute.

When a new victim, shorn of power, is 'dragged out', a finetooth-combing begins of his entire career. This is usually discovered to have been crime-filled from the beginning. Details of all this are held up for public inspection. Onlookers are inevitably reminded, too, of how the traditional Chinese network of mutual obligations, shared secrets of past misdeeds, and regional and family links operates to protect its own – at least until the moment when they are proclaimed to be counter-revolutionaries and class enemies.

Such protection lasts up to the very last second. It is a curiosity of Chinese purges that their targets are not 'named' until the terminal condemnation. This explains, for instance, why ex-Chairman and Premier Hua Guofeng, now nearly at the end of a slide from power that began four years ago, and who is regularly and stridently repudiated in the press, still lingers on as a member of the Central Committee. He has not yet been 'named'.

In order to identify those who currently merit public scorn, the Party is planning to re-register every one of its 39 million members, to weed from its ranks 'the three kinds of people' who snaked their way into the Party during the Cultural Revolution. 40.6 per cent of the membership came in this way, the Party has recently disclosed. In the Dengists' eyes many of them range from the unqualified and incapable to the downright subversive.

Although this whole-scale clear-out, or 'consolidation', is not to start until 1983, and will take three years, a great trawl through the bureaucracy began early this year. It netted over 200,000 dismissals or early retirements, including 11 out of 13 vice-premiers. The Dengists have further displayed their appetite for purging by continuing to track down old accomplices of the Gang of Four. During this hunt we can see plainly the ability of the Party (or that faction of it on top at any particular time) to have its way with 'bad elements'. As usual in anything Chinese the numbers are staggering.

One of the leadership's boasts at the recently-concluded 12th Party Congress was the rehabilitation – also done by the process of 'naming' – of those 'wrongly' condemned in past campaigns, some of which occurred as long as 25 years ago. According to a recent *People's Daily*, these include 2,780,000 former 'landlords', and 'rich peasants', – whose 'labels' have been lifted; together with 700,000 equally exonerated small-shopkeepers, peddlers, and craftsmen no longer designated 'capitalist'.

It is not only the ex-rich peasants, peddlers, and handicraftsmen who are thus freed of their burdens. So are their spouses and children, who were similarly labelled, and who therefore could not serve in the army or secure good jobs. Sometimes it could be much worse. Those with 'bad class backgrounds' were regularly 'dragged out' and beaten to meet the state's punishment quotas during the various political campaigns of the last quarter century. Those thus beaten could be young people born since 1949 who had never exploited anything or anyone. The same thing happened to thousands of intellectuals, classified as 'Rightists' and 'Stinking Ninth Category Bad Elements' in the 1950s, when Deng Xiaoping was Party General Secretary.

One distinguished patriotic scientist returned to the Motherland in 1950 and was promptly accused of Rightism for having been trained in the United States. Only in 1979, when he received a thick rehabilitation file, was he able to resume his research. For nearly 30 years, while he suffered a variety of humiliations, China had lost his services.

He was lucky. In 1980, Party Chairman Hu Yaobang, who had himself suffered in the Cultural Revolution, called on the other *100 million* Chinese citizens who had been illegally treated at the same time to 'forgive and forget'. There were too many of them. If the courts had tried to deal with their persecutors the legal machinery would simply have broken down.

More recently, a trial has just concluded in southwest China's Yunnan province in which Party bigshots from the Gang of Four era have been convicted of persecuting 1,380,000 people, of whom 17,000 were killed and 61,000 crippled.

Even these figures are scarcely comprehensible. So take a smaller example: a Cantonese hospital where, according to the local radio, 'Gang-period influences' still remain. There, the hospital's Party branch deputy secretary, Song Wenyi, was responsible for 'killing many intellectuals', who crossed him at the height of the Cultural Revolution. He also installed his children and unqualified cohorts in hospital posts, where they committed hundreds of medical mistakes. 49 of Song's outraged hospital colleagues resigned when they realized that the local Party was refusing to deal with him. Now he and his accomplices have been ordered to 'seriously examine their mistakes'. In contrast, mere embezzlers are regularly shot in China.

Few of the Party's millions of victims over the years, whether they were its own cadres, teachers, actors, politburo members, or army marshals, have been counter-revolutionaries or class enemies as charged. They were instead the objects of Mao's hatred and the malice of whatever members of his coterie dominated the brawls which distinguished Chinese politics after 1955. Until 1976, when Mao died and the Gang fell, internal exile, disgrace, and death were normal penalties for political losers and other 'bad elements'.

Today there is considerably less of this kind of political violence. Those at the top in politics now who can no longer defend their corners are simply relegated into political oblivion, or retired to 'the second line'. A few, very tough old birds of the highest past eminence are allowed to carry on until they 'go to meet Marx'.

Most ordinary Chinese will tell you that politics these days are much improved. They mean that mindless mass participation – and mass killing – are ended. All the Party today wants from the masses is obedience and hard work, which is rewarded with money. It is all very Russian. □

INDONESIA

From massacre to corruption

Indonesia has been made safe for foreign capital but Indonesians must live in silence, reports Denis MacShane

A SUBVERSIVE WRITER is both a contradiction in terms and a tautology. A tautology because any good writer is subversive, a contradiction because no writer can subvert what is worth preserving. So Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Indonesia's and, arguably, East Asia's greatest living novelist had best be described simply as a writer. His writings earned him prison spells under the Dutch, under Sukarno, and under President Regan's favourite Asian leader, President Suharto, 14 years on the concentration-camp island of Buru.

Pram, as he is universally known, now works quietly on the bottom floor of a small house in one of Jakarta's *kampongs*, while his masterpiece *This Earth of Mankind* (Penguin 1982) gets transplanted and published all round the world. The book, set in Surabaya in 1898, centres on an individual Javanese's quest for independent identity at the height of the Dutch occupation. The themes of cultural, linguistic, legal and political oppression are clear. Published in Indonesia in 1979, it ran into five editions before being

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banned by Suharto.

Pram now works on a geographical history of Indonesia and avoids all mention of contemporary politics when visited. Both his current work theme and his caution are understandable. Indonesia is the world's fifth largest and geographically most diversified country. It has had its political development frozen since 1965.

In that year, there was an attempted coup in which six generals were bloodily murdered. Even today, historians debate the coup's authorship. The official Indonesian line is that it was the beginning of a takeover by the PKI, the Indonesian Communist Party, then the biggest communist party outside Russia and China. If so, it was remarkably inefficient and conveniently suited Western interests grown tired of Sukarno's aggressive and seemingly pro-Chinese neutralism and his tirades against British influence in the region.

Suharto, a quiet and relatively unknown army commander, took control, while a helpless Sukarno stayed in his palace. In a few weeks, at least 500,000 (some say one million) Indonesians were killed. The PKI was wiped out, its members, or suspected sympathisers, tied to trees and hacked to death. Old *kampong* scores were also settled and, in the twinkling of a machete blow, organised political opposition to what called itself the 'New Order' was eradicated. Pram and other opposition intellectuals were sent off to a prison island where conditions were such that a prisoner who came across a scrap of newspaper while working in a field was executed when the paper was found in his possessions during a prison search.

Since 1965, Indonesia has been made safe for Western investors. Citibank, Chase Manhattan, Bank of America, Hongkong and Shanghai stare at you as you drive through Jakarta while a Macdonald's is due to open next year, in a society which has been refining and perfecting fast food for centuries. This massive presence of foreign capital has not benefited the average Indonesian. Although a modest middle class has developed, and a World Bank investment programme has substantially increased the rice output, there are still periodic outbreaks of famine and cholera.

Indonesia's real plague is, however, corruption. Everyone is infected, from the Suharto family – his wife, Tien Suharto, is known as Mrs Tien Per Cent – to teachers who demand $250 of *pungli* before admitting a child to school. The top level corruption is organised a little less crudely. The Suharto government insists that foreign companies wishing to operate in Indonesia do so on a joint basis with Indonesian companies. It is considered helpful to have a general or ex-general on the board and Jalan Jendral Sudirman, Jakarta's main business street, hums with air-conditioned Mercedes taking the military brass from one golden honorarium to the next.

There is plenty of multinational investment in the country whose oil, timber, metal and mineral resources are among the world's richest. Less ostentatious than the Americans, but actually with a stronger business presence, are the Japanese – who have $3.5 billion invested in Indonesia. In exchange for plundering the country's resources, Japan sells it cars, motorcycles, electronic equipment – there is little indigenous industry in Indonesia, as the generals and businessmen have found it easier to make money by taking their cut from trade.

The Japan-Indonesia connection goes back some way. Suharto collaborated with the occupying Japanese army during the war while his vice-president, one of Asia's great trimmers and survivors, Adam Malik, ran the Jakarta wartime office of the Japanese news agency, Domei. As with other countries in the region, those who worked with the Japanese in the war should not be placed in a European-type Quisling category: the Japanese were seen as fellow Asians who destroyed the seeming military invincibility of white colonialism. But the links forged then were useful later, as trade and business boomed. In 1977, Suharto went to Tokyo for a reunion with Japanese wartime buddies and a massive new contract awarded to a Japanese construction firm to rebuild Jakarta's hopeless transport infrastructure suggests that the latter-day Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere is doing very nicely.

But can it last? Growth fell from 8 to 4 per cent last year, while the trade balance moved into deficit for the first time in more than a decade. There is said to be debate within the Indonesian government on whether to keep

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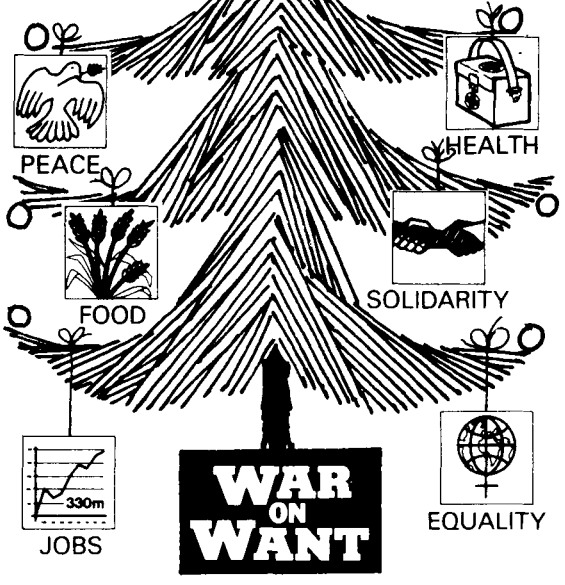

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sucking in foreign capital and continue the high rate of exploitation of the country's resources, or whether to slow down and try and develop a domestic economy.

The debate is a private one, unreported in Indonesia's press. There are some opposition groups, notably the so-called 'Petition of 50', former government ministers and intellectuals who have presented some minor criticisms of the government. Accusatory leaflets and pamphlets are circulated. Government response is brutal. One member of the 'Petition of 50', Fatwa (as with Sukarno and many Indonesians, Fatwa has no other name), is trying to sue the government after he was beaten up by soldiers. His lawyers have been terrorised into withdrawing their services.

Rare publicity was given to the opposition when the government announced it would 'ruthlessly crush' any attempt at a protest march which would coincide with next year's re-election of Suharto to his third seven-year term of office. Since 95 per cent of the population is Moslem, the big worry is the possibility of a militant Islam that could threaten the generals' hold on power. Opposition groups tend to get called religious sects and banned – 365 have been outlawed since 1962. The official ideology is *Pancasila*, developed by Sukarno and standing for god, humanity, nationalism, democracy and social justice.

Control is also maintained by a ruthless isolation from the outside world – journalists are not allowed into Indonesia if they declare themselves as such, while conservative magazines like *Asiaweek* or the *Far East Economic Review* have any material on Indonesia, critical or not, censored before they go on sale in Jakarta. The only accurate information Indonesians can obtain is by tuning to Australian Radio's broadcasts in Indonesian.

There is also a ruthless military policy applied to any suggestion of independence or breakaway by any of the island communities that make up the Indonesian archipelago. Most notorious is the case of East Timor, where the Indonesian army crushed an attempt to declare independence following the precipitate Portuguese withdrawal in 1975. Again, estimates vary but between 100,000 and 300,000 people were killed as the Indonesian army invaded and occupied the territory.

US Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger was in Jakarta recently urging greater arms expenditure on Suharto – in fact, Pentagon spokespersons in and out of uniform are permanently touring the region demanding greater militarisation against a supposed Soviet sea-borne threat from the north. If Suharto follows this course, it will mean even less cash for internal development. Essentially, his hold on power since 1965 has coincided with the most rapid exploitation of Indonesia's resources resulting in enough profits and pay-offs to keep everyone happy. If the Indonesian economy falls away, then the country's existing contradictions will gather force and speed. 1965 may not have been the last, great, bloody upheaval in Indonesian history.

Meanwhile, Pram works from 5am to 11.30pm on his geographical history. He is not an optimist about his country's future. His passport was removed in 1961, so he cannot travel to Australia, America or the Netherlands, where critical acclaim and a warm welcome await him. He is now writing furiously, making up for all those lost years on Buru, about the first contacts between Indonesia and Europe in the 13th century. Better to dwell on the past of 700 years ago. And, for an Indonesian writer, much safer. □

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SOUTH AFRICA

Poverty of 'homelands'

New figures show that the people of the 'homelands' are among the poorest in all Africa, reports John Kane-Berman

SHOCKING STATISTICS just released in Pretoria give the lie to claims that blacks in gold-rich South Africa's 'homelands' are economically better off than those elsewhere on the continent. They also suggest that South African politicians who tell sorrowful stories about food shortages elsewhere in Africa would do well to direct their attention to their own backyard.

The figures, published by a government agency known as 'BENSO', reveal that at least five of South Africa's non-independent homelands (the figures for the sixth are not yet available) are poorer in gross national income (GNI) per head than Algeria, the Ivory Coast, Tunisia, Morocco, and Botswana. In 1979, the latest year for which comparative statistics are available, annual GNI per capita in the five ranged between R572 (£318) in the case of Qwaqwa to R274 (£152) in that of Gazankulu. About six million people live in these homelands that have not become constitutionally separate states from South Africa. The gross national *income* per head in these areas suggests that they are only richer than 20 other African States – including Uganda, Tanzania, and Mozambique.

There is every reason to believe, however, that the official income figures considerably exaggerate the wealth of the homelands, for they include income that almost certainly never reaches them. According to BENSO, the homelands in question had a total national income of R3,283 million in 1980. But almost 80 per cent of this supposed income was earned outside them, either by migrant workers resident on one-year employment contracts in the cities of 'white' South Africa, or by commuters living in the homelands and crossing their boundaries each day to work in the white areas.

BENSO is unable to say what proportion of these migrants' and commuters' earnings is actually remitted to the homelands rather than spent in the white areas. The 'white' town of Pietersburg in the Northern Transvaal, for instance, would die a quick commercial death but for the fact that residents of the neighbouring black township of Seshego in the Lebowa homeland spend most of their money there. Migrants spend even less of their wages in the homelands. Absent from their homes (and their families) for 11 out of every 12 months, they almost certainly spend most of their money in Johannesburg and other white towns. Official GNI figures are therefore a misleading measure of the homelands' economic performance. Their own capacities are better measured by their internal gross domestic product (GDP). While the GNI per head in 1960 was R488, the GDP per head – which excludes income earned outside by migrant workers and commuters – was only R128. This would almost certainly put most homelands even further down a comparative table with the rest of Africa.

That the homelands are badly off by African standards is also suggested by budget figures. Lesotho, generally recognised as one of the poorest countries in the world, has a budget this year of R202 per head of population. Kwazulu, which is one of the better-off homelands, has a budget – including money raised from taxing its own residents – of only R126 per head.

The year before last, South Africa exported about 650,000 tons of maize to states in Southern Africa (including Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, Kenya, Malawi, Zaire, Mauritius, the Ivory Coast and Angola), but poverty and malnutrition in South Africa's homelands had reached such critical proportions – aggravated by drought and mass population removals – that the liberal South African Institute of Race Relations found it necessary to mount a nation-wide 'Operation Hunger' campaign to help feed their people. Today, still, Operation Hunger cannot cope with the desperate pleas for help that flow in from many parts of the storehouse of the western world's minerals. □

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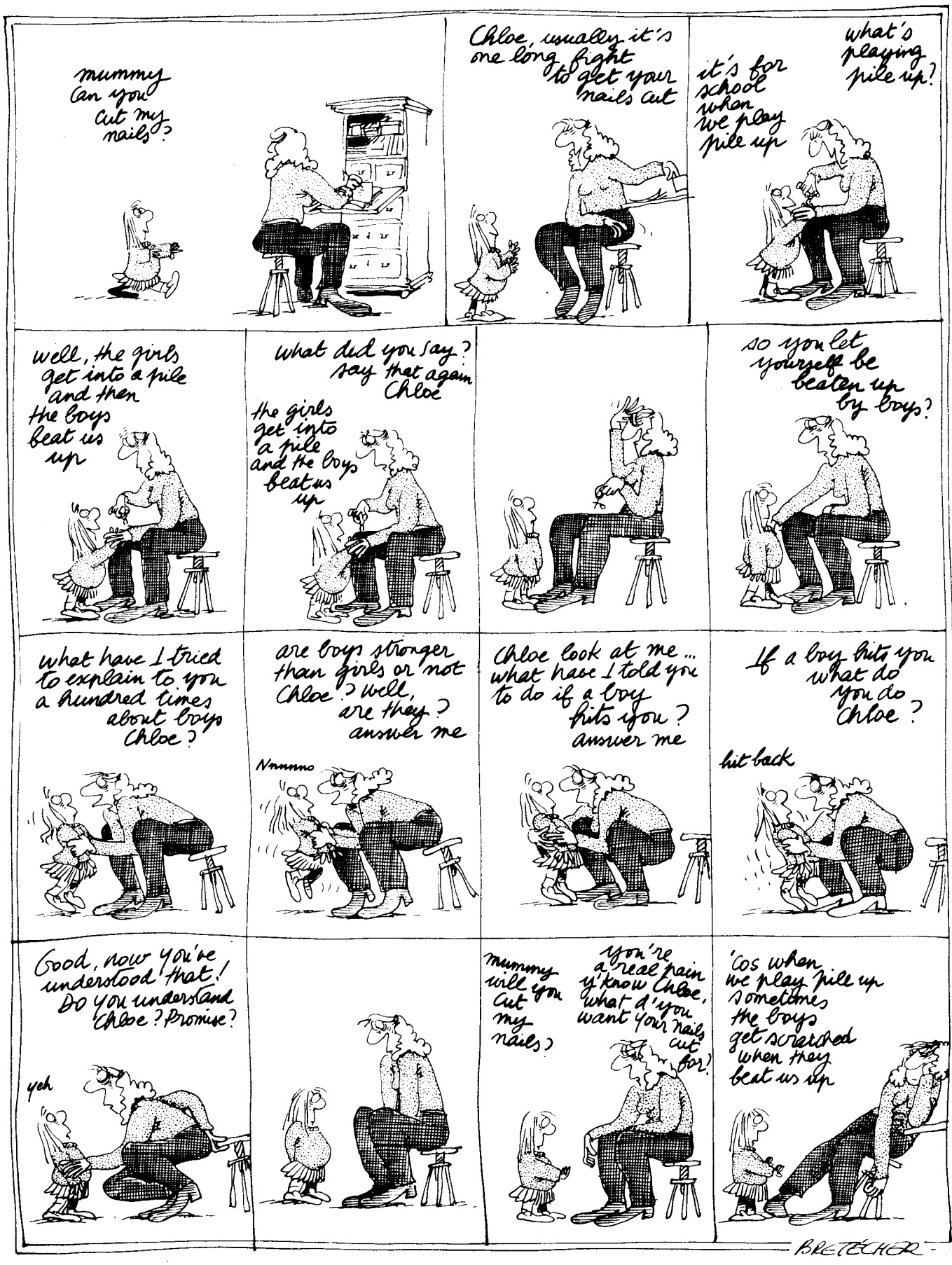
mummy can you cut my nails?
Chloe, usually it's one long fight to get your nails cut
what's playing pile up?
it's for school when we play pile up
well, the girls get into a pile and then the boys beat us up
what did you say? say that again Chloe
the girls get into a pile and the boys beat us up
so you let yourself be beaten up by boys?
what have I tried to explain to you a hundred times about boys Chloe?
are boys stronger than girls or not Chloe? well, are they? answer me
Nnnnnno
Chloe look at me ... what have I told you to do if a boy hits you? answer me
if a boy hits you what do you do Chloe?
hit back
Good, now you've understood that! Do you understand Chloe? Promise?
yeh
mummy will you cut my nails?
you're a real pain y'know Chloe, what d'you want your nails cut for?
'cos when we play pile up sometimes the boys get scratched when they beat us up
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LETTERS

The year ahead for CND

E. P. Thompson, Worcester

Thanks for Sarah Benton's constructive report on CND's conference (*NS* 3 Dec.). But before the error becomes part of mythology, may I insist again that there was no division at the conference on the issue of 'British withdrawal from NATO'?

CND is already committed to abandon any nuclear alliance, which means in effect NATO, and this was reaffirmed by both sides in the debate. The questions at issue were: 1) should the issue be given a high priority in 1983? 2) *how* should CND campaign – under the simple slogan, 'Britain out of NATO', or (as the Exeter amendment proposed) in the context of 'weakening the grip of both NATO and Warsaw Pact military alliances on the nations of Europe'?

Conference voted, by a slender majority, in favour of simplicity and priority and (as Sarah Benton argues) against complexity. That's fair enough, and there was no deep split. I am happy to go along with the decision, and to revive the old perspective of 'positive neutrality'.

But there are going to be complexities which some delegates may not have foreseen. It may just be possible that a mass protest movement – if it keeps its head and remains undivided – can force NATO governments to halt cruise missiles. But the national and supra-national institutions and ideologies of NATO, which have been constructed over 30 years, will not be brought down by a great shout, as was Exercise Hard Rock. Only a government can take Britain out of NATO: that government must first be elected: and taking Britain out will entail a total reappraisal of alliances and diplomacies.

I would hope that as CND campaigns in the coming year it can spare time to think not only about taking Britain out of NATO but about what, in a positive way, it wishes to take Britain *into*? It cannot be a vacuum. It cannot be the Soviet bloc. It can be into the non-aligned group of nations, or into a Europe where the bloc division is breaking down on both sides. I would hope that the internationalist positives, and not the little Englandish negatives, will inform our campaign.

Training on the dole?

Peter Sampson, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham

The MSC has suddenly and belatedly begun to send shivers down a lot of spines. Donald Hirsch's article (*NS* 19 Nov.) and Katie Johnson's letter (*NS* 26 Nov.) reinforce my own suspicions that something very odd is going on.

Most recent are the reports that YOP schemes being funded by the MSC at some technical colleges have been threatened with closure if the students are allowed to publish 'material with a political or generally controversial nature'. Perhaps the next stage will be to stop students even reading such material and courses will be closed if the college library stocks the *New Statesman*. Then book-burning in the college car-park?

However, there is just one hint that perhaps I'm being over-sensitive and that the MSC is not so much frightening as merely loony.

One local Education Authority in the North-East is running a scheme in which unemployed teachers are re-employed by the MSC to spend four full days a week for a whole term in a primary school. Their sole function is to talk to the children about 'Litter'.

They've actually been provided with a glossy pack of educational material which includes little plastic gloves for picking up litter and is produced by something called the Brighton Polytechnic Keep Britain Tidy Unit. Beachcomber and Posy combined couldn't improve on that.

Really, I suppose, it's not all that ludicrous, not if you're a Director of Education, anyway. After all, here's the MSC offering you a cheap supply of bodies who can be stuck in front of classes to con parents that education cuts aren't really having much effect on staffing.

All in all, the MSC's grand strategy appears to be to get an educational system responsible to them rather than to elected authorities and one with the principal function of producing docile dustmen.

Ivor Gurney

Prof. John Lucas, Loughborough University

I am afraid the gremlins got at my review of Ivor Gurney's *Collected Poems* (*NS* 3 Dec.). Gurney did not write 'the darkness of common things', nor would I have accused him of doing so. What he wrote was 'the dearness of common things'.

Assaults in schools

Tom Scott, Education Secretary, The Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical Punishment, London E2

As Rick Rogers reports ('Telling tales out of school', *NS* 26 Nov.), figures recently released by the Chairperson of the Inner London Education Authority's Schools Sub-Committee show that there has been a dramatic decline in the number of assaults on teachers in Inner London since the decision was made to ban child-beating in schools. But the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers claim that 'internal' ILEA figures show that there were 151 assaults on teachers in the capital in 1981.

In fact, until recently these 'internal' figures, produced by the Health and Safety unit, included every incident in which the Authority's employees (not just teachers) were injured even if the injury was accidentally caused. Thus these statistics included assaults on caretakers by intruders and accidental injuries caused to nursery-school teachers by children sending their dinky toys too fast across the classroom floor!

However, a recent report prepared by the Health & Safety Unit distinguishes between accidental and non-accidental injuries, and gives remarkable corroboration to the statistics earlier released by the Chairperson of the Schools Sub-Committee. This report reveals that during the period from January 1981 until the end of March 1982, teachers in the ILEA's schools received 36 non-accidental injuries from pupils, 7 from intruders and 3 from parents, making a 4-term total of 46 (compared with the 3-term figure of 35 for 1981 given by the Chairperson of the Schools Sub-Committee). Of these injuries, only 7 were classified as 'more than superficial', i.e. some trace of the damage remaining after 7 days. This means that ILEA's 21,270 teachers may expect to suffer a non-accidental superficial injury once in every 727 years of teaching, and a serious injury once in 4,051 years.

Of course, everyone accepts that some assaults go unreported, but it is reasonable to assume that official statistics indicate a trend, and in London that trend has been downward since the ILEA made the decision to ban child-beating. Yet, in that time sensational media publicity, based largely on allegations by the NAS/UWT, has given the public the impression that most teachers are assaulted virtually every day.

The boring truth is that there are relatively few assaults on teachers. Those that do take place are generally provoked by some form of physical attack by the teachers themselves – either 'official' beatings or illicit 'thumps' or 'clips'. Therefore, instead of compiling blacklists of children who have allegedly assaulted teachers, NAS/UWT should take steps to protect its members by joining our campaign against one of the causes of assaults on teachers – child-beating in schools.

Labour and Palestinians

Tony Greenstein, Chairperson, Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine, London N16

In his article 'Red Ted and his friends' (*NS* 26 Nov.) Patrick Wintour is obviously trying to beat the *Private Eye* record concerning the number of mistakes in one article.

Firstly, the Labour Committee on Palestine was set up precisely because the Labour Middle East Committee which had existed for 14 years had achieved nothing in the way of support for the Palestinians in the Labour Party. Not surprising, given it supports the existence of the State of Israel. It is even more surprising that Wintour didn't mention that LMEC supports the reactionary Arab regimes and is in fact pro-Arabist rather than pro-Palestinian – e.g. the Jordanian ambassador was the guest of honour at its last Annual Meeting. In the LCP's short existence it managed to get the Labour Party Conference to support its emergency motion on Palestine which called for the establishment of a democratic secular state in Palestine and the recognition of the PLO. Hence our anger at Ted Knight for packing the meeting with 100 members of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

It is a lie that I am 'a keen supporter of the British Anti Zionist Organisation (which has strong links with the Iraqi Baathists)'. I left BAZO precisely because of these links, as Wintour would have known if he had read my letter in the *Jewish Chronicle* of 27 August. But at least BAZO, unlike the WRP, has never published any material which supports these regimes. I consider the Iraqi, Libyan and the other Arab regimes to be vicious, blood-stained and in themselves the creations of imperialism. Presumably this is why *Newsline*, the WRP's organ, supports them. I did, incidentally, support, up till very recently, the Iranians in the Gulf War so I can hardly be accused of being a Baathist supporter!

You are of course absolutely correct about the WRP being only interested in destroying any pro-Palestinian organisation which it cannot control.

Exhibition appeal

Julian Spalding, Director of Arts, City of Sheffield, Graves Art Gallery, Surrey Street, Sheffield S1 1XZ

We are organising an exhibition of 'Realist' painting in Britain from 1948-56 to be held at the Graves Art Gallery in Sheffield from 1 April to 8 May, 1983, followed by showings at Norwich, Wolverhampton and London. We are anxious to get in touch with collectors who have works by artists of this period, such as Jack Smith, Derrick Greaves, Edward Middleditch, John Berger, Alfred Daniels, Michael Fussell, etc. We would particularly like to trace collectors who acquired works from the Beaux Arts Gallery and would also be interested to hear of works by contemporary foreign artists, such as Guttuso, Zigaina and Minaux.

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Peter Lato and Gustaw Moszcz

The (Martial) Arts in Poland

WE WILL soon reach the first birthday of martial law in Poland. There's little doubt that the junta wants to lift military rule before 13 December, since nothing can prove its failure more obviously than the solitary miserable candle on this poisonous cake. Whether Jaruzelski can afford to do this is an open question, and that's not our central concern here. We want briefly to highlight the effects that the general has had on that invisible yet vital area of Polish life, its culture.

The 1970s were a period of now unbelievable liberalism, though it didn't seem so at the time. Certainly there were censorship and harassment and artists whose work was never to be publicly spoken of. Dictatorships come and go but poetry remains – the Nobel Prize winner Milosz is only too aware of that. We look back on Gierek's era with peculiar nostalgia, not because the man wasn't corrupt and ignorant – he was – but because the penalties we faced then were relatively light. Now we face threats of prison, harassment, sackings. In terms of idiotic severity Jaruzelski certainly has managed to turn the clock back, but to the 1950s, not to 1980.

This regime has a harder time than Gierek's, especially when it comes to propaganda. The TV and radio pap, the insulting distortions sprawling across the official newspapers and journals are now ignored by everybody, party members included, since they know it's just propaganda. If they want the truth they read the party's internal bulletins, since even the unpalatable reality finds a place there. The clash between official and non-official versions of reality is complete. Just as we can only dream of one day reading the party's inside version of what's happening, so too we are unlikely to see the Catholic Church's version of its handling of affairs. For different reasons, neither side is quite able to reveal the full story.

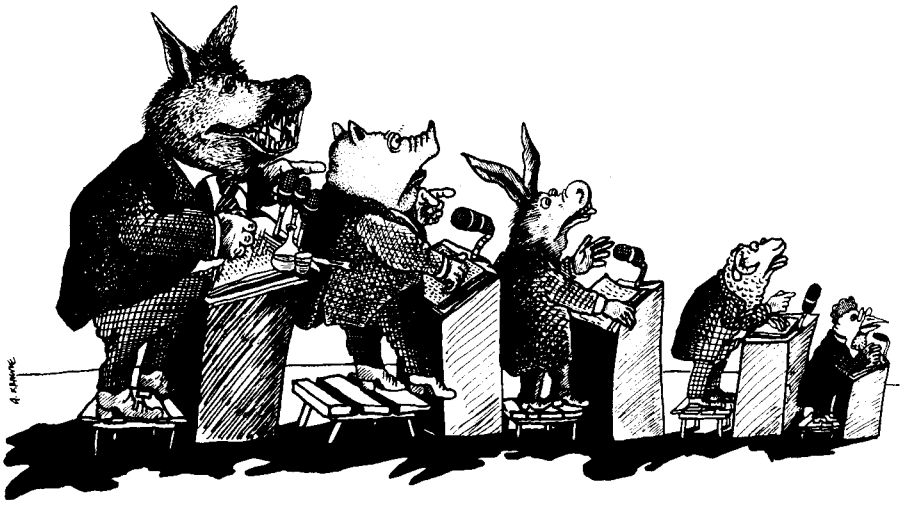
The deformation of culture due to the junta is something not apparent since the closing of journals and the dismissal of writers and journalists is not only obvious but essentially temporary, transient. The real threat lies in the manipulation of young minds and the re-writing of the history of ideas, which goes on constantly now. The direct mendacity of the regime is a distinct failure, as everyone knew it would be. Its success is in its deeper repression of young writers and artists, preventing their free expression and inter-action with ready audiences.

The actual production of books has not been noticeably hard hit yet, since the lengthy production schedules ensure that books now appearing were mainly ready before martial law started. But all books are again being submitted to the scrutiny of the censor. The junta has generously said that there will be no return to the practice of banning authors and artists by name. 'Only' the subject-matter will be cut. But since over 60 editors have been sacked from various publishing houses this seems somewhat dishonest. If you are an author who writes something which is drastically cut, petrified publishers are not going to flood you with further contracts. 'Sensitive' books written and accepted before martial law are being mysteriously hindered from reaching final printing. We're in the same position as always – the books people really want to read are published in issues of a couple of thousand, whilst the dross gets 20 times that. One recent banning was of the dangerous sounding title *On Art*, by a Polish painter living in France. When you send a book to the publisher it's now like sending it to a temporary grave; by the time it comes back from the censor the worms have changed it out of all recognition. Of all publishing ventures, only the adventurous Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* ever marks censorship interference by actually quoting the martial law regulation under which the article has been forcibly cut, therefore giving readers a good idea of what has been removed.

Of all areas perhaps cinema has been worst affected. Making a film in Poland without state finance is practically impossible. Since martial law, most of the internationally respected directors have worked abroad or been silent. More than ten features have been withdrawn from distribution, and the Ministry of the Interior has systematically confiscated massive quantities of documentaries, the production of which has literally stopped. Inconvenient facts have always annoyed the regime much more than the workings of the imagination. Screenings of new films before public release are held before directors closely supporting the regime and party officials. Naturally they give the thumbs down to any film with politically unorthodox views, no matter what the quality.

Thus the correct line is being forged into the victory of the People's culture. Where should the inverted commas go here – round Correct Line? Victory? People's? Or even Culture? The regime has reason to be happy, since it has severely crippled the gigantic moves made by underground art during the 1976-1981 period. To a large extent the magazines, journals and publishing houses involved in this 'second circle' for writing were obliterated after 13 December last year. Their property was seized or smashed; their workers arrested; their contributors interned or, now, released, isolated and closely observed. What was half-tolerated during the last five years met with ruthless violence, and now scarcely breathes. The secret police who had been on a tight rein were unleashed, and not since the Stalinist period were so many intellectuals and artists jailed for purely political reasons. All but a very few are now 'free' – as animals in a nature reserve are free.

But the elimination of this second circle has been incomplete. Of course there are many flourishing political bulletins and information sheets, some of them stretching to hundreds of pages and covering the whole country. What is more astonishing is the rapidity with which longer-lived un-



Andrzej Krauze

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dergreund writing has recovered. The central underground publisher for many years, NOWA, and another, KRAG, are preparing new books. One leading journal, *Krytyka*, will soon appear despite the fact one of its key figures, Adam Michnik, is arrested and in jail. Perhaps the most considerable venture is the second issue of *Wezwanie*, a thick journal given over entirely to 'war' records, diaries, poems and stories. That such magazines can appear, have readerships well into tens of thousands, and be passed from hand to hand till the paper falls apart, shows the regime the extent of opposition it really faces. It's vital that such work is done, since otherwise this history will be lost – or rewritten. All such efforts are many times more fraught with danger than ever before and, naturally, the manner of the conspiracy involved is ultra-tight.

Against this we have to set the sycophants of the regime, since there will always be quislings. The leading version in Poland today, a hack journalist and one-off novelist who once worked for Deputy Premier Rakowski's newspaper *Polityka*, now edits *Tu i Teraz (Here and Now)*. Kozniewski has adopted the role of regime spokesman on cultural matters from this position, stating that 'we do not need the Writers' Union . . . all we need it for is to express common ideological ties with the state'. As representative of the regime, Kozniewski voices what the Generals wish to see happening to culture, its reduction to a subordinate and pleasantly decorative role; back to folk dances and war films about the nasty Germans. These outcasts, such as the openly anti-Semitic novelist Wojciech Zukrowski (who, after appearing on TV, found his doorstep crowded with copies of his own books) have opted for the only function left to them. As failed artists they can make themselves famous only through identification with the current tide.

The policy of the regime is simple – any magazine or institution which neither posed nor poses a threat to orthodox political life can re-appear and jog along nicely. Any artist now has to face fundamental moral dilemmas. How is this culture to exist in the future? Where can one publish work without being a collaborator? Has one the right to condemn those who don't restrict themselves to the handful of acceptable journals? Should we just write for the underground? And how can, say, a film-maker or actor live this way? How can we make a living without becoming besmirched?

Whatever happens in this respect we are becoming culturally isolated in a fashion not seen since the Stalinist era. This is most obvious with the importation of Western films, which has virtually ceased. But even the subscriptions to Western magazines and journals, which were available for years in the Press Clubs and reading rooms to be found in every city, have dried up. Perhaps the most graphic illustration of this side-effect of martial law occurred during the Warsaw Book Fair, an international and once important event. About half the rooms were empty, since the majority of Western publishers didn't come. The official media proclaimed it a 'huge success'. □

DIARIES
Christopher Hitchens

Winning through

The Wheat and the Chaff
FRANCOIS MITTERRAND *Weidenfeld* £12.50

General de Gaulle was addicted to saying that he had *une certaine idée de la France*. By comparison, in those years of folly and grandeur, his socialist opponent looked rather insipid. Doggedly pursuing his idea of a left of centre coalition, bravely coming second time after time, written off by the more exciting Marxists, François Mitterrand endured a long eclipse. But he won through in the end, and in these reflections from the Seventies we can find that he, too, has a particular conception of his country. Here it is, from 1975:

> For many years now I have felt the itch to chastise the impostures of a right wing which calls itself 'national' and wishes to monopolise the brand name and vintage 'France' – chateau-bottled of course . . . I had seen enough miserable lackeys of the German occupation straighten up again in the Gaullist takeover of 1958, seen them drink and eat and sleep again, urinate red white and blue, and berate the Left in the name of national interests which they alone seemed to understand.

Mitterrand quotes Henri Guillemin, whose book on French nationalism contains this pithy summary of the case:

> 1940 is inscribed in that series of major dates which over a century and a half have marked the history of France and each time indicated that profiteers have resumed their threatened power: 18 Brumaire 1799, 24 June 1848, 2 December 1851, 8 February 1871, 26 August 1914, 10 July 1940. Repeated victories of the propertied classes.

Clearly, for Mitterrand, socialism *is* patriotism. That is his reply to the tricolor-bedecked bourgeoisie, whether Gaullist or simply of the old school. The years which are spanned by this diary do not include Mitterrand's shameful period of defending French Algeria, so we get no glimpse of the ugly underside of his national feeling. What does emerge, though, is his way of translating all problems into French. Discussing Henry Kissinger for instance (about whom he is wonderfully dry and sardonic at a number of points) he considers the shortage of political ability in the United States and comments:

> It is from this angle that Kissinger's actions must be observed and judged. An unplanned policy can take as its point of reference only 'Realpolitik', whose very nature it is to copy what has been done before. After the rupture brought about by the French Revolution, Metternich clung for thirty years in the same way to the Europe of pre-1789. Perhaps such men take pride in forcing history to march backward.

In a similar fashion, Mitterrand's reflections on the Middle East seem to be highly conditioned by his revulsion from Vichy's Jewish policy. In discussing the Third World, also, he speaks of dictatorship in countries like Chile as if wrinkling his nose at fascism. Nothing wrong with that.

Another dominant strain in these jottings is that of anti-communism. Mitterrand has always detested the French Communist Party and suspected the Soviet Union. Apart from anything else, he saw them as collaborators with De Gaulle (which they were). He also, I think, dislikes their deadly and tyrannical routinism. On a trip to Moscow, he reflects on the dogmatic droning of Mikhail Suslov, chief ideologist of the CPSU. Suslov reads from a prepared text while talking, and Mitterrand notes that:

> As a matter of fact, no Communist official, from the most modest secretary of the most modest cell to the Secretary General of the Party, can begin a discussion without reading . . . Suslov himself - even Suslov – reads!

It has been Mitterrand's great ambition to supplant the Communists as the natural party of the left and the workers in France, and he may in part have succeeded. This does not mean, as social democrats and other fauna may suppose, that he is indifferent or hostile to Marxism.

On the contrary, he shows that he has read and enjoyed Marx, and that he considers some such familiarity a natural attribute of a thinking person. This shows in the book principally when Mitterrand discusses cultural matters with himself. Part Two is entitled 'The Bee and the Architect', which alert readers will spot as a reference from *Capital* ('what differentiates the worst architect from the best bee is that he has built the cell in his head before building it in the hive').

He has the equipment to read the so-called 'New Philosophers' and to make vanquishing remarks at their expense. He can be fluent and emotional while discussing Neruda, Theodorakis, Garcia Marquez or Malraux. It is – I promised myself I wouldn't say this – impossible to think of a British or American politician who could have written these diaries.

THE related themes – patriotic but internationalist, and anti-Communist but radical – are joined by a third, which is a bias against commerce. I don't say against capitalism, because it strikes me that Mitterrand's distaste is for the whole business of business. (He has many reflections on gardening and rural life which tend to confirm this.) He dislikes the press barons, the speculators and most especially the arms dealers because they are *vulgar*.

Perhaps it is for this reason that his period in the Presidency of France has been so disappointingly conformist. He doesn't seem to soil his hands with economics, and the arms dealers (not to mention the nuclear potentates) flourish as never before. It will be sad indeed if the next triumph of the propertied classes is at the expense of this cultivated but (still, come to think about it) rather insipid man. □

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ESSAYS
Harriett Gilbert

Parallel bars

Nothing Sacred
ANGELA CARTER *Virago* £3.50

To whatever subject Angela Carter turns her typewriter ribbon, there is always satisfaction to be had from the manner in which she does it. She uses words with the deceptive nonchalance of a gymnast playing on the parallel bars. In her fiction, of course, she does more than play – pushing language through the purity barrier to a new, explosive form – but even in this collection of reviews and articles her athletic ability is evident.

The pieces are mostly collected from *New Society* (to which Carter has contributed for 15 years or more) and those from the '60s/early '70s are certainly sloppier, more over-written (Carter acknowledges this herself) than the later contributions. 'Notes for a Theory of Sixties Style', for example, is an awkward, dilated analysis of women's 'street-level' fashion. The observations of life in Japan (where Carter lived for a couple of years, having won the Somerset Maugham Award) are already finer and more distinctive in style; while the recent articles on Gay Talese, *Gone with the Wind*, Colette) vibrate with the hum of creative excitement held in a firm verbal fist.

The collection covers such areas as Carter's family background (upwardly-mobile working class); fashion; the cinema; books; and sex. The *projections* of sex, to be specific – as pornography, religion, economics, power – the social constructs that express, de-fuse, or abuse the personal act. Much of her work is a vivid exposure of the ways in which sexuality, as defined and controlled by men, insults, frustrates and damages women. Where the latter collude however (as with Linda Lovelace) she is less than sympathetic – revealing a greater interest in the ways of sexual oppression than in either the results or the alternatives.

This would not, perhaps, be important (nowhere does Carter declare herself, or even imply that she *might* be a feminist strategist), were it not that her immersion in the artistry of description – and in the pursuit of ideas for the fun of the ideas – has the effect of reinforcing the structures that she explores, of making them seem both immutable and fascinating. An article on Japanese pornography starts:

> The nudes are equipped with a variety of phallic props (French loaves or those round-headed Japanese dolls), and they all wear faintly anxious smiles, as if to say: 'Am I being erotic enough?' with that prim lack of inhibition peculiar to the Japanese. Full-page ads feature chubby, immensely trustworthy-looking men holding aloft bottles of magic elixir while demanding: 'Come too quickly? Having trouble with *your* erection?'

The intention, presumably, is ridicule; but that intention is at once subverted by Carter's absorption in her subject, by her fascination, even affection; which the reader is drawn in to share. As it is with her feminism, so it is with her socialism – presumed from a fine and scathing explanation of the class system, yet put into question by the speed with which it becomes a nostalgic, romantic voyage round the alleyways of poverty:

> Even in the accounts of her beloved mother, Colette's actual prose implicitly invites the reader to admire both the quality of the observation and the skill with which a different time and place are recreated . . . Colette's actual prose is itself narcissistic.

Linguistic narcissism is as much Carter's problem as Colette's. That the final piece in her book should be an acute dissection of that other writer is as revealing as it is ironic. As journalists, if not as novelists, the two have much in common (an appreciation of animals living, and a relish for animals dead, to start with) but it is 'the quality of observation and recreation' that is their greatest weakness. And greatest strength. For, in spite of the troubling impression left by *Nothing Sacred*, the articles, as single objects, are, by and large, exquisite. Perhaps it would have been wiser to have left them as single objects. □

Michael Hofmann

Extinction

So now, after twenty-six years, he hangs up
and walks out on you. The line goes dead
as you tell me. Electricity cheeps and thrills –
a malfunction at some international exchange.

There wasn't time to offer sympathy or advice,
not that I knew what to say, in any case . . .
Your life has been one attrition, and when you try
clumsily to defend your interests, he snaps back:

'Forward my mail, I'm not coming home again.'
For him, as for the Old Man of the Sea,
there's always someone else, another willing back
to climb. But when you're a woman, past fifty,

with a family and no career, what then . . .?
Flat earth, the narrative curve of dusk.
A string of lights indicates the road that
brings people to this place. The rip of canvas

as pigeons scatter in terror from their branches.
A faraway siren sounds like faint breathing.
From the middle of a field, the plaintive
squeal of some low and resilient life-form . . .

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W. H. Hudson: A Biography

RUTH TOMALIN
Faber £13.50

Today, as in his lifetime, W. H. Hudson is considered England's finest nature-writer; yet he began life – eccentrically, as Edward Thomas put it – in Argentina. His American parents ranched on the pampas, where he conceived an early enthusiasm for wildlife, especially 'the feathered people'. Living in an ornithological backwater proved advantageous: little was known of the country's birds and Hudson landed a commission to collect specimens – one of which was subsequently named after him – for the Smithsonian Institute. By the time he emigrated to England in 1874, aged 32, he was a Corresponding Member of the Royal Zoological Society. In England, however, he made little headway in a discipline increasingly dominated by professional scientists.

Turning to a literary career, Hudson received some attention, but little money. Almost 20 years passed before *The Naturalist in La Plata* liberated him from the genteel poverty that hampered his work. The next 30 years brought unbroken acclaim: a Civil List pension; success for his South American romances, notably *Green Mansions;* recognition as the 'archetypal naturalist' of the Edwardian era. The final accolade came in the form of a monument in Hyde Park.

Although barely 200 pages long (plus copious notes), Ruth Tomalin's book will probably become the standard life simply because materials do not exist for a biography of Ellmann-like completeness. Hudson communicated little of his deeper feelings, avoided company, and, to thwart posthumous muck-raking, destroyed his personal papers. Tomalin, therefore, concentrates on his visible career as writer, naturalist, and campaigner for the protection of birds.

This involves no loss of proportion: it was to these public activities, rather than any private life, that Hudson was fiercely dedicated. Tomalin has organised the available evidence – much of it drawn from Hudson's own writings – admirably. Barring the discovery of further information, it is difficult to see how anyone could justify a new biography.

David Montrose

Troublesome Business: The Labour Party and the Irish Question

GEOFFREY BELL *Pluto Press* £4.50

'Englishmen never can and never will understand Ireland. It is a question of psychology, as well as of politics and of justice. You have never attempted to understand Ireland.' These words spoken by James O'Grady MP to the Commons in 1916, could well serve as a synopsis of this excellent little book, which in a mere 150 pages exposes the utter failure of Labour's Irish 'policy'. It has been, at the least, myopic; in the main, morally indefensible; and at its worst, grovellingly subservient to Unionist bigotry.

The catalogue of Labour's incomprehension is a long one. The Webbs, readily assuming the white man's burden, urged 'socialist missionary work' for 'this detestable race'. Arthur Henderson cheered when the executions of 1916 were announced in the House, and welcomed the 1921 Treaty, which partitioned Ireland, as an 'honourable peace' which would 'open up a new era of friendship and mutual confidence' between the two countries. The Attlee government, revered as the most radical in Labour's history, institutionalised partition in the 1949 Act which gave Unionists a veto on constitutional change, currently the most serious obstacle to any permanent settlement.

Stranger still has been the persistent admiration which senior Labour politicians have expressed for Unionists, who, it must be remembered, find their natural allies in the Monday Club. Yet Herbert Morrison was seemingly bewitched by Sir Basil Brooke to the extent that he allowed him a free hand to write key sections of the 1949 Act. Harold Wilson let successive Unionists have their way on security policy, and swallowed whole their explanations for the slow pace of civil rights reform. This, however, pales beside the sight of 'Orange' Roy Mason, or the open cynicism of Michael Foot, as Leader of the House, buying votes for the minority Labour government with the promise of greater Unionist representation. There has been, it is true, a persistent minority movement among backbenchers and activists to recognise the justice of the nationalists' cause, but the Labour establishment has been all too willing to co-operate with the Unionists.

Don Concannon, Labour's current Irish spokesman, was to be found last year at the deathbed of Bobby Sands MP, assuring him that he would get no support from Britain's socialists; he was at this year's Labour Party Conference opposing a motion for Britain's withdrawal and extolling the virtues of plastic bullets. In the unlikely event of Labour winning the next election, Concannon will have over-all charge of the Northern Ireland Office. On the evidence as presented by Geoffrey Bell, one can only agree that 'Labour's definition of socialism will remain the most curious of all'

Frank Kane

Scapegoats of the Empire: The True Story of Breaker Morant's Bushveldt Carbineers

GEORGE WITTON *Angus & Robertson* £8.95

How does one judge this book, the attempted white-washing of a crime most foul (shooting defenceless prisoners, one of them wounded, by Australian soldiers as Bushveldt carbineers during the Boer War)? Why republish the 1907 edition today? Is it because of 'the greatly acclaimed film *Breaker Morant*' (the blurb)? The tragi-comedy of this book is that the author – the only one of the culprits to escape with his life – was as transparently honest as he was misguided. He obeyed the order to shoot and claimed it was not 'murder' but 'retribution'.

Were Witton and his brother officers, Lieut Morant and Lieut Handcock, really 'scapegoats of the Empire'? Was Lord Roberts, who refused to commute all but Witton's death sentence, the real culprit? Was the whole trial merely an attempt to placate the Boers by showing how 'fair' imperialists could be? Even if these questions could ever be answered conclusively, it has to be remembered that *this* book is written from the perspective of Australian 'mateship' where personal loyalty is paramount.

The significance of Witton's account for the reader is therefore not political, but personal. It is the tale not of men depraved by war but of a human being desperately struggling for survival in a British prison while suffering from increasing ill-health induced by cruel conditions. There is the added poignancy of Witton's self-deception. He was his own scapegoat.

J.A.S. Phillips

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PAPERBACKS
Alan Brien

Pleasures of gossip

ALICE JAMES, born 1848 in New York, was a marvellously frightful Saki child, youngest offspring and only girl of an intolerably talented brood, notably William and Henry. Through fits and tantrums, she rebelled against the domination of these brilliant, disturbed males, fighting back the constant urge to 'knock off the head of the benignant pater'.

From the age of 20, invalidism was her refuge. To control her rages, she became, as she said, 'doctor, nurse and strait-jacket, all in one', pouring out into her notebooks during the final years all she thought and felt while waiting for what she called in true Jamesian fashion, 'the final mortuary moment'. Just a few hours before that came in 1892 she was rephrasing a sentence which displeased her.

Totally suppressed for 40 years, published with many deletions in 1934, her journal now surfaces as *The Diary of Alice James* (Penguin American Library, £1.95), complete and unexpurgated. Despite her lifetime sick-room, exile in Leamington and South Kensington, Alice is never morbid or self-pitying. 'How well one has to be, to be ill', she admits. Accustomed since girlhood to fainting whenever conversation grew too exciting, she charts her symptoms with cool, clinical interest ('Imagine me "going-off" on hearing the results of the St Pancras election!') and diagnoses her condition as 'moral dyspepsia'.

She scours the newspapers for more and more evidence of the 'pharisaism' of English society, the 'tinsel' royalty, the upper-class husbands like 'pachyderms' and their sponging wives, the docility and passivity of the poor, the obsessive cult of respectability at all levels, the hypocrisy of a people who delude themselves that 'they alone of all human races massacre savages out of pure virtue'.

She dispatches her servants, nurses and friends, like a hermetic press-baroness, to provide material for her personal gossip column, missing little, even down to George Eliot's 'dank, moaning features'. The result is a small masterpiece, best read where it was written: in bed.

It is the pleasure of such gossip, scandal, back-biting and tittle-tattle about the famous which has made modern biography outsell fiction. Today, the Life adds new terror of death.

NOT many shreds of reputation are left to cover *C. Day Lewis* (Unwin, £4.50) after finishing the studied yet sympathetic portrait of him by his eldest son, Sean. Only someone so close, and rightly so trusted, could have reached those who knew Day Lewis's inner life – his first wife, the biographer's mother; his second wife, Jill Balcon; Rosamond Lehmann, with whom he had a long relationship; and the other women who punctuated, and occasionally overlapped, them. It is clear that no one else, certainly not Day Lewis in his own memoirs, could have come so near to telling the whole truth.

Yet the picture of this perennially divided, many-sided writer cannot be other than that of a failure, one of Auden's 'horizontal men'. He was a conformist and Communist, an internationalist uneasy abroad, a class-war commando who ducked Spain and chose the Ministry of Information rather than the services in 1940 while intriguing to be a CO in the Home Guard. He was a novelist with little interest in other people, his strongest sense that of propriety and property, his deepest instinct that of self-preservation.

He will be remembered for his thrillers rather than for the poetry which was the central object of his life – even his infidelities were often a way of screwing the Muse. This now seems largely mechanical shuffling of phrases like intellectual Scrabble, and written as if with somebody else's pen. 'Grease in the sink-pipe of literature', Geoffrey Grigson dubbed him in a pitiless, unforgiveable phrase. His biography suggests he never purged himself of the fear that it might turn out to be truer than it ever was.

FOR those seeking a jollier, more anecdotal and entertaining tour of literary life, nothing can match the *Paris Review* interviews, published in a series of which the fifth has just appeared, under the title *Writers at Work* (Penguin, £2.95 each). It is like being invited to the world's best cocktail party, attended by more authors than you could read in a life-time. There is not much here to enlighten those who yearn to know how literature is created – each writer's formula, like each centenarian's recipe for a long life, suits only himself. Much of it bubbles with epigrams, insults, boasts, lies, put-downs and revisions of history plus some very quotable stories.

The editors, perhaps wisely, make little attempt to check some of the tall tales the interviewees often shamelessly tell. Cocteau claims before the first world war to have known a little foreign *domestique* who did housework for Left Bank artists and admitted his aim in life was to overthrow the Czar. 'We all laughed . . . it was Lenin.'

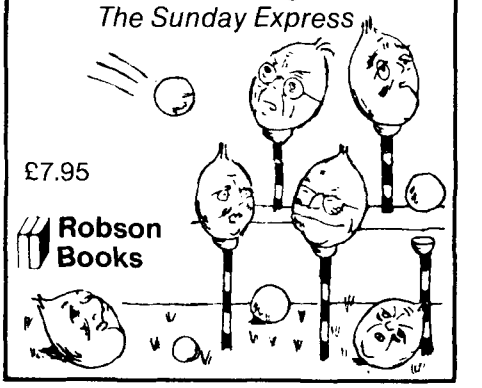
IT WAS not, of course, Lenin, as can easily be demonstrated from a marvellous compilation by Gerda and Hermann Weber in the Macmillan Chronology Series, *Lenin: Life and Works* (Macmillan, £4.95). It is not the catchiest of titles and the whole look of the book promises only a dreary string of dates and facts. Instead, it turns out to be a brilliantly original alternative to the conventional biography. We follow Lenin from birth to death, with personal details of what he was doing, and thinking, year after year, month after month, frequently day after day.

I must have read about a dozen lives of Lenin but never before has he jumped from the page as a real, believable human being. We get Lenin the dutiful son always writing home to mother even while skipping across Europe ahead of the police. Lenin, predictably, the chess player but also the carver of chessmen, the champion skater, the lover of hunting with his hand-made guns, the inveterate cyclist, the skilled mountain climber, the taker of cold showers, the visitor of waxwork museums and air displays, the pundit on everything from German Workers' Choirs to the new automobile industry.

PABLO Neruda is one of the authors in the latest *Writers at Work* and his memoirs were published in 1974, the year after his death. *Isla Negra* (Souvenir Press, £6.95) is his poetic alternative autobiography, transmuted into verse, alternately epic and lyrical, and translated by Alastair Reid. Socialist poetry too often tends to wind and rant, resounding platitudes and hollow rhetoric, but Neruda's verse is both rich and steely.

And the final section 'Critical Sonata', where he struggles to face the phenomenon of Stalin, 'the mustachioed god with his boots on/and his immaculate breeches ironed by a real slavery', should be required reading for all lefties. □

OUT OF ORDER
Frank Johnson
The best of his parliamentary sketches
'Extremely funny. His ridicule ranges over the whole political spectrum... a rare and wonderful cast'
Malcolm Muggeridge
The Observer
'No one can deflate pomposity or expose hypocrisy better than he'
Anthony Howard
The Listener
'Fresh, witty, shrewd and entertaining'
The Sunday Express



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FICTION
Lewis Jones

The blood of Eve

Queen of Stones
EMMA TENNANT
Cape £6.95

The story of *Queen of Stones* is a familiar one. A group of children is lost on a desert island. Among them are two possible leaders and one obvious loser; a dreamer, a pair of practical twins and a collection of characterless 'littluns'. Free of grown-up restraint, their atavistic games of make-believe become calamitously real: 'Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!' Emma Tennant has translated *Lord of the Flies* from the masculine to the feminine; from a political novel about aggression to a psychological one about sex. The difference between the two novels is clearest in the significance they attach to the blood-letting. In Golding it symbolises the loss of innocence, 'mankind's essential illness': it is the blood of Abel. In Tennant it is the 'cathartic' acceptance of experience, 'the curse of women': the blood of Eve.

The two leaders are Bess Plantain and Laurie Lelandes, both of Forton Court, Dorset. Bess, the daughter of the owner, is 'exceptionally good-looking, with long reddish-gold hair'; she has 'the beginnings of a woman's figure' but has not yet begun to menstruate. Laurie is the illegitimate daughter of the French housekeeper. She is about the same age as Bess, but we are ignorant of the state of her womb. She, too, is attractive, of dark colouring. In contrast to Bess, she is of a passive and taciturn nature and is a devout Catholic.

Bess was once very close to her father, as was Laurie to her mother; but at the onset of the girls' puberty their respective parents took to sleeping with one another and grew cold towards their children. A step-relation of Bess's has made sexual advances to both girls and has apparently been successful with Laurie. Bess identifies strongly with Queen Elizabeth I, Laurie with Mary Queen of Scots.

The loser, the 'class victim, ugliness victim', is Melanie Ayres, who is about eight years old and lives on a council estate. She was a battered baby and has twice, unsuccessfully, been put out to foster-parents. She is a compulsive liar and thief and is from time to time possessed by a poltergeist. At night she spies on her father as he copulates in a bus-shelter. Her fantasy is that she was exchanged, when a baby, for Bess's younger sister, Jane.

THE STORY of how the girls become lost in a fog while with a group on a sponsored walk, and of how, at Bess's instigation, they pinch a rowing-boat and go to the Isle of Portland, where their fantasies are enacted, is presented, 'very tentatively', as 'an imaginative reconstruction' of actual events. The narrative is interspersed with 'case histories, compiled by sociologists, teachers and psychiatrists, of these girls and young women'. The purpose of this is that a fuller understanding may be reached of 'the psychopathology of the developing female' and 'the mythology sustaining our concept of the feminine in society'.

Ms Tennant is a fine writer, and her flair for eerie fantasy is well known. She is very good at what she calls 'the familiar tingle of pretend games, the heady sensation that things can at any moment topple over and go out of control', and the language and behaviour of the children are exactly right (the bibliography acknowledges a debt to the work of the Opies in this field).

But I found the symbolism of this novel rather heavy-handed and was unhappy about its psychology and social comment, which put me in mind of the Pompidou Centre. Like the heating and ventilation of that building, they are not, as is the usual way, neatly hidden in its structure, but stick out from it like so much brightly-coloured ducting. In the building the device is witty and makes the interior more spacious and flexible; but in the novel it is pompous and unnecessary; it restricts and overpowers a potentially excellent story. □

NEW POETRY
8
Edited by John Fuller
This is the latest in the series of anthologies published jointly by the Arts Council of Great Britain, Hutchinson and PEN. Among this year's contributors are Michael Baldwin, Alan Brownjohn, Stewart Conn, John Cotton, Gavin Ewart, Roy Fuller, Roger Garfitt, Frances Horovitz, Andrew Motion, Peter Redgrove, Derek Stanford, Howard Sergeant and Anthony Thwaite. £6.95

NEW POETRY 9
Poems are being considered for our next anthology. Up to six poems, typed and in duplicate, each copy clearly marked with name and address, may be sent to The Editors, New Poetry, c/o P.E.N., 7 Dilke Street, London SW3 4JE by 31st December 1982. Unfortunately no acknowledgement can be sent and typescripts cannot be returned.

HUTCHINSON Arts Council OF GREAT BRITAIN

LETTERS
Kathy O'Shaughnessy

A laconic panache

Lord Byron: Selected Letters and Journals
ed. LESLIE MARCHAND *John Murray* £12.50

Byron loathed Robert Southey, the contemporary Poet Laureate. In his Dedication to *Don Juan* he took the opportunity of addressing him – 'You, Bob, are rather insolent, you know' – in the humiliating and familiar tones of master addressing servant. Byron could unfailingly catch a speaking tone in all its finer nuances on paper.

Don Juan outraged his contemporaries; in a poem that declared itself 'epic' he chose not only to break all the rules ('Hail Muse! Etcetera.', he wrote casually) but to air his personal dislikes. In the context of epic, the rhythm and freedom of conversation violated convention with particular impact, and that iconoclasm is central to the achievement of *Don Juan*. Byron's *Selected Letters* exhibit that same controversial freedom all the time, parading the irregular vitality of the spoken voice on the page. Of Thomas Moore he demands:

> – As to 'Don Juan' – confess – confess – you dog – and be candid – that it is the sublime of *that there* sort of writing – it may be bawdy – but is it not good English? – it may be profligate – but is it not *life*, is it not *the thing?*

Which is more or less what one feels when reading this volume of letters and journals – Byron undilute, the edge of his wit still very sharp, *the thing* very much alive.

LESLIE Marchand from the complete 12 volumes of Byron's letters and diaries selected these extracts. The result is a fragmented narrative of Byron's life. He travels, writes, rides, loves, and Marchand has chosen carefully, giving us glimpses of Byron doing many different things. It is a pleasure to see Byron through his own acts of communication and self-representation. The letter is a curious medium that seems to fall somewhere between conversation and art. Dismissing heaven as a consoling myth, he writes with friendly urbanity:

> My dear Hodgson, – I will have nothing to do with your immortality; we are miserable enough in this life, without the absurdity of speculating upon another.

Humour characteristically defuses Byron's unease about death as he appeals disarmingly to common sense and sceptical wit plays against more serious thought. The result is a prose of unfailing poise, of laconic *panache* that veils as it suggests, armed with a capacity to mock itself.

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Byron had wit and style, was a strong, truthful thinker at the same time (quite unable to euphemise) and even incidental, passing comments in his letters have a complexity that is lightly worn; suggest someone who distrusted the merely visible. In an oblique and unacknowledged way Byron, like his fellow Romantics, felt the importance of the unconscious in poetry. In 1817 he wrote to John Murray, 'As for poesy – mine is the *dream* of my sleeping Passions – when they are awake – I cannot speak their language – only in their Somnambulism – '. When he experiences 'passions' he can't write them, can't write poetry. He is able to only when they have ceased to be a part of his consciousness, emerging instead in his fictive world, subsumed but not absent. Byron is fascinating and honest about the function served by poetic creativity, and in 1813 wrote in his journal, 'To withdraw *myself* from *myself* (oh that cursed selfishness!) has ever been my sole, my entire, my sincere motive in scribbling at all . . .'

Paradoxically he loathed the transcendental mysteries of Wordsworth's poetry, the open credence given to imagination and mind. He also despised poetry as an occupation. On the crudest level the dialectic between scepticism and idealism in his poetry has its echo in his contradictory allegiances, where poetry somehow ends up as being against 'the world' and its pleasures, to which Byron was famously committed.

THIS selection gives us Byron in his diffuse actuality, contradictions and all. We read about the poet nearly handing Teresa Guiccioli (his mistress) into the water as he forgets that in Venice the streets are canals, or wryly asserting to Douglas Kinnaird: 'I haven't had a whore this half-year – confining myself to the strictest adultery.' Or the lovely irony with which he condemns Kinnaird, his literary agent, for his *delicacy*: 'Damn your delicacy', he scribbles crossly, 'It is a low commercial quality'. Just before he died he wrote a last letter to Teresa Guiccioli: 'My dearest T. – The Spring is come – I have seen a swallow today –.'

The Byron of every day, who watched time passing or noted the arrival of spring, is as much in evidence as the exile who seduced all of Europe with his self-made myth in *Childe Harold*. In Marchand's biography one couldn't see this Byron. Marchand idealised him, was obviously very taken with Byron's aristocratic rank, talent and Casanova status. But he is an excellent editor of these letters and diaries.

We are able in this selection to poke through the surrounding mythology (the demonically attractive genius etc.) and see limitations, fallibilities. Byron ridiculed Keats, cared nothing for the Lake Poets (and that despite their affinities); he was an appalling chauvinist (his greatest compliment to Mme de Staël: she should have been a man) but, well, yes, for all that, his letters charm and disarm with their honesty, their off-hand vitality. It is delightful to see Byron's ignorance of the future, of the greatness of his poem in a stray remark like 'It is called Don Juan, and is meant to be a little quietly facetious about everything.' □

ART

John Spurling

Thy kingdom come

Van Dyck in England
National Portrait Gallery

The powerful effect of this exhibition is partly to do with its being a record of some of the leading figures of a high-pitched period of our history; still more with the high-pitched ambitions of the artist himself. Portraiture might be a good way of earning a living, but it was not generally considered then, any more than it is now, a very high form of art.

Because he happened to be good at it and because he couldn't hope to rival his former master Rubens as a painter of scenes from

Queen Henrietta Maria *(Detail)*

H.M. The Queen

legend and history, Van Dyck turned portrait-painting into his own kind of contemporary legend, taking as his model not Rubens, but the even grander dead master, Titian. Titian worked for and mythologised the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who had appointed him court painter and knighted him in 1532. In 1632 Charles I of England knighted Van Dyck and offered him the same opportunity. Both king and painter were fully conscious of the parallel.

The result, however, was nothing so crude as mere propaganda for an off-shore court. The parties to the arrangement were not primarily men of the world. Charles had a passion for art and believed in the divine right of kings; Van Dyck was a devout Catholic (four of his sisters were nuns, his youngest brother a priest), esteemed as much for his religious paintings as his portraits. Rubens's altarpieces are violently active, grand dramatic events on a deep stage. Van Dyck's are brought forward, as it were, to the apron and picked out in bright light against darkness, the poses suggesting slower, more controlled movement, the faces and gestures concentrated in close relationships. The emphasis, even in scenes such as the mocking of Christ or the Crucifixion, is on the spiritual transcendence of suffering. Van Dyck's extraordinary art is to be able to portray a living and moving body whose face carries you inwards towards intelligence, thought and things metaphysical. So, appointed court painter, he transforms the English nobility into noble men; he does more than flatter their looks, he discovers their ideals. Gainsborough did it after him, so did Lawrence and Sargent, but the ideals became more worldly and low-key. Van Dyck's sitters, especially his king, aspire to be wise and good as well as brave, rich, well-born and well-dressed.

Apart from Charles himself, the most telling example is the regime's strong-man, Thomas Wentworth. There are three portraits of him in the exhibition. In the first, just appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland, he stands indoors full-length in armour, baton held downwards in his left hand, right hand caressing the head of a compliant Irish wolfhound. In the second, painted three years later, he is shown three-quarter-length against a beetling cliff, his armour glinting fiercely, his baton tilted ominously upwards towards a glimpse of cavalry on a beach behind; his right arm, though, raised horizontally across the front of the picture, palm upwards, suggests balance, even perhaps some apology for the cavalry. The Queen, who didn't much favour Wentworth, thought his hands the most beautiful in the world, but Wentworth joked about his own 'bent and ill-favoured brow'.

In both portraits Van Dyck has used the hands to convey firm but kindly control and the tough face to express rectitude and ruthless determination; in the second there is an added tinge of anxiety and self-defensiveness. The third picture is a double portrait of Wentworth and his Secretary of State. The Secretary, in a luxurious red tunic, leans forward obsequiously, pen poised to take a letter, but Wentworth, sitting against a red-gold curtain and wearing black civilian dress, is deep in his own thoughts. He looks irritable, even grim. The little finger of his right hand is curled out of sight, as if picking at the arm of his chair. Governing the good kingdom of Charles I is proving an insoluble headache even for this man 'of great practical ability, of powerful intellect, of tireless energy', as C. V. Wedgwood described him.

Many critics have detected an element of melancholy in Van Dyck's English portraits and it is certainly easy to imagine these trim heads on their platters of white lace tumbling in the Revolution to come; but that is hindsight. It is Wentworth's seriousness which is common to all these courtiers, from the grave elder statesmen through the impeccably groomed young blades to the already responsible-looking children. However rich and solid the settings, however conspicuous the consumption of silks and

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velvets, lace, clean linen and soft leather, there is no hint of the dissolute irresponsibility of the Restoration. On the contrary, the faces are lean and intellectual, unsmiling, almost puritanical in their self-sufficiency; the Civil War, they remind you, was not fought between fops and sobersides but split the ranks of the very people you are looking at. Algernon Percy, for instance, 10th Earl of Northumberland: here he is twice, half-length in armour and again full-length in velvet and lace, baton in hand, tightly composed with a huge anchor into a strange geometry of triangles, against a background of warships. Percy, 'a graceful young man, of great sobriety and regularity' was Lord High Admiral of England and, according to Clarendon, the proudest man alive. By the time the summons came to fight for his King, he was out of sympathy with the royal policies, refused, and was relieved of his command. Van Dyck shows us his outward office and his inward pride and principle and leaves us in no doubt which mattered most.

The ladies of England, however, did not call out Van Dyck's best powers, except as a costume-painter. He was perfectly capable, as one can see from his religious paintings and from the drawing of his termagant mistress, Margaret Lemon, of finding the same independent strength in a female face as in a male; but there is a blandness and blankness about these countesses with their indistinguishable ringlets and pop eyes which suggest how much Van Dyck's best portraits depend on implicit activity. The greatest painting in the exhibition is of Charles himself, magnificent in black armour on a white charger, framed in a triumphal archway against a lurid sky, with his French master of horse striding admiringly beside him (looking up at the King, indeed, with almost the same expression as the wolfhound's for Wentworth). At the centre and summit of this icon to earthly power is the familiar little pale, sharp face with its reddish nose and eyes, as if Charles had spent all night praying in a cold chapel.

God's representative to the people of Britain may rely on the batons of his scowling Wentworth and his proud Percy, but he himself looks more like Christ, transported with all his inward cares and otherworldly thoughts from the back of a donkey and the mockery of the Jews to the red and gold saddlecloth of a royal horse and the kingdom of this world. There never was such an England as Charles and his Knights of the Round Table imagined but on canvas at least his court painter could create it for him, rivalling the legends and moralities of the past with living actors.

The exhibition is admirably designed and lit, with an outstanding catalogue by Oliver Millar. All one lacks is a comprehensive study of Van Dyck (there has been none in English since 1900), setting his English period in the context of his career and paying as much attention to his religious and historical paintings as to his portraits. With perfect timing, a sober, serious and well-written text and copious illustrations (Phaidon, £25), Christopher Brown has provided it. □

ARCHITECTURE
Jules Lubbock

An open letter

DEAR Lord Annan, Sir Hugh Casson, Sir Michael Levey *et al*, Your committee of geriatric assessors is now two months late with the result of the competition for an extension to the National Gallery on the adjacent Hampton Site. You clearly need some youthful advice. Stop dithering and toss a coin. It's the only way of choosing between three well-nigh indistinguishable finalists you selected in late October. Each of them satisfies the terms of the brief; to flog off a 125-year lease on public property in return for 20,000 square feet of gallery space. Each provides a stunningly conventional and inoffensive façade and a stunningly conventional suite of galleries.

I thought that Richard Rogers' aircraft carrier, which you rejected in October, would have appealed to you as the perfect monument to the Falklands War – what better office address than Invincible House, Trafalgar Square? You hadn't the wit to see this. Rogers, moreover, was the only competitor who has built a successful modern art gallery, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, which breaks down the barriers between works of art and the lay public. On the Hampton Site he proposed a new public space linking Leicester Square with Trafalgar Square through a pedestrian street and an underground arcade. This was clearly the last thing you wanted. The glossy brochure sent to competitors with its gold insignia of the portico of the National Gallery and its gilt lettering made it plain that you were selling prospective tenants the dignity of the association with Great Art, not the presence of grubby art students and vagrants from the entertainment arcades milling around the entrance and riding up and down the escalators.

Yet none of your finalists had the courage to offer you a truly post-modern façade in which the upper gallery, embellished with a sculptured frieze of great artists, was supported by a giant order of figures columns representing Banking, Property, Retailing and Cable TV crushing Discord, Liberty and the Unemployed beneath their feet. The words of David Hume, that great forerunner of Thatcherite economics, suitably adapted, could have formed the inscription: 'Industry and Refinements in the Mechanical Arts produce Refinements in the Liberal Arts.'

In only one respect have you succeeded; you have been successfully used by Michael Heseltine to focus public discussion upon architectural packaging and to distract it from the real issue – the allocation of space and other resources. The National Gallery is uniquely fortunate in having the whole of its collection on public display. The National Portrait Gallery next door is wretchedly cramped for space. Any extension on the Hampton Site ought to have been designated to release space in the National Gallery for the NPG to expand, and to provide a public art library and educational amenities in a style designed to extend the audience for the visual arts, on the model of the Centre Pompidou. Imagine any other country in the world building an art gallery over an office block!

But even the NPG is fortunate in comparison to many provincial galleries. Manchester City Art Gallery has 1,600 of its 2,000 paintings in permanent store, including masterpieces which have not been seen in public for over a century. A new gallery has long been mooted, yet today the central gallery in Mosley Street is threatened with closure for lack of funds, and the branches are shut for six months in the year. If money is to be spent on new galleries, London is not the place to spend it.

Architecture is not a fine art. Buildings are good only insofar as they serve worthy ends. Heseltine, who appointed you, has cunningly employed the current vogue for post-modern figurative architecture to dupe the public, the architectural profession, the architectural press, and your worthy selves. On reflection, you should pocket the coin; the only honourable course open to you is resignation, enclosing a copy of my letter and a recommendation for the central funding of National Art galleries in the major provincial cities.

Yours sincerely . . . □

TELEVISION
William Boyd

Butch sodality

IS IT worth getting in any kind of a lather over **The Professionals** (LWT)? Should we preoccupy ourselves in any way with the values it seems to endorse? I suspect not. After all it's just the latest version of the hoary old cops and robbers theme dressed up to fit in with more contemporary types of good guys and bad guys. The latter are, more often than not, 'international terrorists' or, as the formula had it this week, members of 'the international terrorist freemasonry'. The good guys are CI5, whose job it is to impede and catch these jetset villains.

Most of the work is done by a triumvirate of moody agents. The boss, Cowley (Gordon Jackson), Bodie (Lewis Collins) and Doyle (Martin Shaw). About Cowley, the less said the better. Gordon Jackson sets his facial muscles and his vocal chords to register 'urgency' and leaves it at that. Bodie and Doyle are potentially more interesting. Some efforts have been made to delineate their personalities on the lines of, say, Starsky and Hutch. Bodie is the sort of crass yobbo with a cropped haircut one saw getting on planes for Biafra and Angola. Doyle has

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better dress sense and is something of a *sensitif*. He has doubts about the job he's doing – 'heart', it's known as – and suffers from the odd attack of angst.

Interestingly enough, self-doubt was the theme of this week's episode, an ailment that afflicted all three of the team, though to varying degrees. Doyle experienced the heaviest dose in the form of a bullet through the chest (despatched by an international terrorist, oriental sub-class). For some reason Doyle's will to live went into decline. As he lay on his hospital bed, tubes looping from every hole in his face (like the victim of some demented Dyno-Rod operative), we were vouchsafed eerie glimpses into his subconscious (voice over, lots of CO_2 smoke, fish-eye lens) where the issues at stake were mistily debated. Doyle's dilemma (was it worth coming round only to take up this dirty job again?) initiated a more subdued parallel discussion undertaken by Bodie and Cowley as they pursued the 'maniac political assassin'. 'The issues in this trade are complex,' Cowley mused urgently as they raced around town.

The moral point – how far can you go to preserve democracy in the West – was thrown into higher relief by the duplicity of a foreign office mandarin (Philip Latham, at his most oily), an 'official spokesman' prepared to ignore the terrorist outrage as long as it served long-term political interests. This had the effect of casting Cowley *et al* as even more honest chaps, charged with the thankless task of keeping the mean streets as clean as possible.

Well, they managed it and Doyle lost his *weltschmerz*. They would persevere, one felt, drawing strength from their own butch sodality rather than from any Socratic dialogue over the rights and wrongs of the case. Not that they tussled with problems that energetically. At a particularly low point Cowley said 'This job doesn't get any easier,' worry playing urgently across his features. 'Well,' grunted Bodie, 'I suppose once you start asking "why?" then it's time to get out.'

Harmless, escapist stuff, one concludes, until the thought comes that no doubt these exact sentiments would be enthusiastically echoed by Lieutenant Steven Whitehead. But Whitehead, though, is a *real* policeman. He works on the notorious 10th floor of the Johannesburg police headquarters where he interrogates detainees, one of whom – Niel Aggett – hanged himself in his cell after a 62-hour session at Whitehead's hands.

We heard Whitehead's side of the story ('I deny this', 'I deny this absolutely', 'We do not use such methods of interrogation') in a low-key but chilling **TV Eye** (Thames) reproduction of the hearing into the causes of Aggett's death. The part of Whitehead was taken by Peter McEnery – all young executive probity – who played it with unsettling authenticity. This was a valuable exercise (and, given that actors were reading the transcript, done with commendable restraint and responsibility) for the very simple reason that now we too have had a chance to hear the evidence and will be better placed to judge the magistrate's decision – which will be announced later this month. □

THEATRE
Benedict Nightingale

In the dark

Crystal Clear
devised by PHIL YOUNG *Old Red Lion*
Still Life
JOHN BYRNE *Royal Court*
Where Are Last Year's Snows? and **The Dead Class**
TADEUSZ KANTOR *Riverside*

The programme of **Crystal Clear** acknowledges help from no less than 66 individuals and organisations. In other words, the piece is thoroughly researched; and, in the best sense only, it feels it. Phil Young and his three players have learned what it's like both to be blind and suddenly to go blind. They know the implications, whether they involve home helps, furniture, or the upheavals of the soul. The trouble with plays, movies, TV documentaries, anything about disablement tends to be an awful worthiness, which stirs the centres of guilt while paralysing every other part of the anatomy, from rump to will. The trouble with much 'improvised drama', the category to which *Crystal Clear* belongs, is that it regards people sardonically from the outside. Both dangers the Young quartet avoids, triumphantly.

Well, the character played by Diana Barrett does perhaps sometimes behave as if 'self-absorbed', 'insensitive' and even 'bitch' were stamped on the front of her T-shirt. Yet even she – exasperated by the calculated vagueness of her picture-dealer boyfriend, and unable to cope when diabetes destroys his sight – has reasons and feelings worth respecting, not to mention her fair share of pain to endure. Indeed, there are times when each of the defences elaborately constructed by these three people suddenly shows great, gaping cracks, giving us a plausible insight into their jagged egos and, not least, an ending of eloquence and power.

The picture dealer, Anthony Allen, has been seeing a blind girl, Philomena McDonagh, on the side. Now his own affliction brings out the degree of her dependence on the sighted, her abject yet understandable feat of finishing trapped in some household ghetto with a man as helpless as herself; and the clash of her desperation and his produces as genuinely unsettling a scene as is presently available in the London theatre. I don't suppose *Crystal Clear* will hit anywhere much grander than its Islington pub, not having telly stars and Tony awards to sell it; but it makes *Children of a Lesser God*, said by some to be a serious study of disablement, look cute, trite and shallow.

The population of John Byrne's **Still Life** has twice before been seen in London, first going amiably amuck in the dye-making department of *The Slab Boys*, then running still amucker in the works dance of *Threads*. Both those plays celebrated the vim, variety and occasional resourcefulness of young Scots who had been herded up, caged, then sentenced to have the life-blood drawn from their still-intact jugulars. The mood of this third episode is, however, quite different: better, yet worse, much worse. The boys have escaped the slab-room, only to find themselves trapped in new and profounder ways. One is actually dead, killed by a gay lover; the gods have punished another by granting him his desire, the freedom to paint; and a third has, rather improbably, become a rock-star of the thicker, more drivelling variety. It is funny, sometimes very funny, and observed with all Byrne's sly sensitivity for telling detail; yet the swagger of the jokes can't and isn't meant to, conceal the bleakness of the author's attitude to aging, change, achievement, love, everything.

The death-blow dealt Riverside by Hammersmith Council is a cultural atrocity of the first magnitude; and, speaking as a local ratepayer myself, and (I think) on behalf of many others, I'm willing to stump up as much as is necessary to achieve resurrection. The studios are unique, for the conviviality of their atmosphere, for the size, scope and adaptability of their acting spaces, for the enterprise of their programmes. Where else are major companies from abroad to go, not least the moving sculpture-show directed by Kantor? His **Snows** left me colder than can have been meant; but **The Dead Class** remains as visually stunning as at Edinburgh several festivals ago. Where, I repeat, is the astonishing Pole to find houseroom when Riverside Studios close? □

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FILMS
John Coleman

A far, far cry

E. T. (U)
Empire; Plaza; London release
W. C. Fields Season
Electric, throughout December
Hero
ICA

At last it's here, the one you have all been waiting to see again, legally this time, and on the big screen. And it still leaves me – I caught it first at a legitimate preview back in September – feeling like the loneliest man in London, a pariah of the emotions, dry as an unreformed Scrooge and wondering where all my tears went before entering this fantasy of a cute kid and his pet monster from outer space. As much has been written about Steven Spielberg's pretty commonplace and comfy suburban childhood in the American Southwest, where his dad took him out one night to see a meteor, as about **E.T. – the Extra-Terrestrial** itself: how the erectile-necked, bug-eyed little alien was created by Italian sculptor Carlo Rambaldi for $1.5 million; the authentic affection that developed between this metal-and-rubber feat (and near-foetus) and the excellent boy actor Henry Thomas; and so on. The pop-psychological connection linking director and achieved dream have been – as it were – exhaustingly explored. The exegeses alone might better befit a phenomenon of the order of the Second Coming (given the cassette-piracy, *that* anyway is what we rather have). But we also have a phenomenon.

Spielberg has a huge gift for engaging our simplest, rawest emotions: highway-phobia (*Duel*), submarine threats (*Jaws*) and – in *Close Encounters*, and most wickedly – the opposite: sky-awe, that sense everyone has surely had that one day something momentous is just bound to loom down, if not poke through. Yeats said, 'Tread softly because you tread on my dreams', and I am all the warier of giving offence to millions of weepers at *E.T.* since the superbly crescendo arrival of that vast, glowing wedding-cake in *Close Encounters* thrilled me rotten, to the core of some kind of night-magical 'recognition'. Others were able to dismiss this as an expensive special effect: it worried me for weeks and still enthralls in memory. So; '*my* dreams' – tread softly. Spielberg is a film natural of superlative craft. And not only spacecraft.

Why, then, should the much less flash and equally well-constructed *E.T.*, perkily scripted by Melissa Mathison (who co-wrote that pleasant surprise *The Black Stallion*), inspire such spleen? After all, it is often terribly funny, with a confident, throwaway appeal: flick-of-the-wrist alert. When a modest space vehicle lands in and takes off from a wood on the fringes of an LA suburb, somehow leaving behind a small Alien – two weirdly long, leathery fingers; assorted grunts, squeals, growls, whinnies – nocturnal adults come hunting with harsh torches, crash up in cars, are themselves burly, faceless, 'alien' presences, frighteners. The tone is set for serious-faced young Elliott (Henry Thomas), with his typical middle-class LA family of absconded dad, brave ma (Dee Wallace), elder brother (Robert MacNaughton) and little sis (Drew Barrymore) making the best of things in their open-plan home rich in technology and toys, to discover and befriend the best toy of all, a mild wee loving-kindly thing from Out There. Swiftly christened E.T. (initials that, yes, embrace 'Elliott'), this rather repulsive creature is as swiftly assimilated into easy visual adoption: ration of a scream or so apiece before the kids accept him – and, by Spielberg, we'd better follow suit.

For this enjoined accommodation to an artefact that looks flayed, premature, brown, grey, off-white, slimy, matt, stumpy, person-sized, brachycephalic, dolichocephalic, pathos-eyed, Kermit-lipped, no-necked and giraffed by turn, depending on the emotive exigencies of the occasion (but mostly, I suppose, like a tortoise off the shell), is one of a quiver of tricks at the director's ready: nothing alien is inhuman to the liberal eye, or mind's eye. E.T. further endears himself, as he busily learns to mouth 'home' and 'phone' and cobbles together a contact-device from household scraps, by getting marvellously drunk after a raid on the fridge and then being zonked by the fridge door as Ma goes busily about her business, still unaware of his existence. Sis dresses him as Miss Piggy and is morally ticked off for the humiliation by tender Elliott, but another great scene has a dwarfish E.T. scuttling around in a Hallowe'en sheet, with *us* awarded *his* eye-hole view. He and Elliott, the big point is, are children beneath Spielberg's skin: and Love is the name of the game; and Grown-Ups threaten Love, kick it around. Watch them here murkily eavesdrop Elliott's house, finally to take the place over in a whirling antisepsis of cops and clinicians, before a last wily Mary Poppins escape. There is fun Disney would have been proud of in this brilliantly manipulative movie. But to weep at a celebration of infantilism, however fancied up with intimations of innocence? A good laugh's one thing; and so is a good cry. *E.T.* is a far, far cry, a bleat rather, self-pitying, for the moon. Or a moon-toy.

As a fierce antidote, if there are any other like minds out there, a quick plug for W.C. Fields – my favourite misanthropist – drawling honest evil at the Electric. At the ICA, happy memories suggest a visit to Barney Platts-Mills's 1970 *Bronco Bullfrog*, currently being revived with his latest, very peculiar **Hero**, an experiment largely in Gaelic which even its maker has reservations about, and not just the Highlands one around which he shot this amateur, primitive, garbled fable. □

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2749 **Set by May Day**

An extract of up to 140 words from a party political broadcast which unintentionally puts people off voting for the party concerned. By 31 December.

No 2746 **Set by P. W. R. Foot**

The Modern Weekend

Report **By Mercy Dash**

No room for me. A generous *neuf* to the winners. *Proxime accesserunt* Stanley J. Sharpless and Peter Norman.

Sunday morning

While still he sleeps, her fingertips
Enjoy a swift and crafty run
Above the subtle membrane of
Their Sinclair ZX-81.

But soon he signals he's awake
And drops a raunchy hint or two
That this would be a smashing time
To watch his hired *Electric Blue*.

Which has to be switched off, of course,
When Kirk returns from Daddy James
(Spoilt as usual) with cassettes
Of Astro-Blast and Glob-man games.

And as he zaps the aliens,
She wonders what folk did before,
With just each other to absorb
Their thoughts, and zeal for love, and war.

GEORGE SIMMERS

Saturday night

Now the kids have left home
And old age approaches
We are bored by the thought
Of outings in coaches,
Or joining the conscripts
Playing whist at the club,
Or a snooze by the box,
Or small stouts at the pub;
So with *me* in string tie
And a Brylcreemed D.A.
And my sharp Fifties drapes
In black velvet on grey
And *her* in her Glo-Sox
And skirt from the ballet
We meet up with the Teds
And jive at the Palais.

PETER ALEXANDER

Sunday morning

Beware the stairs. With papers in a bunch
under one arm, I strain to right the tray's
elliptic tilt. The thought of Hollandaise
to saturate Eggs Benedict at brunch
bruises my brain, and scalding coffee slops
over my rancid towelling dressing-gown.
Oh shit. The *Sunday Times* falls. I reach down,
and while I'm groping the *Observer* drops.
The bed's a raft. I drag myself aboard
and finger newsprint on the sheets like sin
while last night's *pinard* amplifies the din
from next door's D-I-Y freak. My sweet lord,
I'll never, never drink like that again . . .
The reprobate reclines beneath the quilt,
sure of his punishment: the stings of guilt,
the rituals of intestinal pain.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

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TAKING PART

John McVicar

Pulling 'em onto the punch

CABLE TV's PROSPECTS now look distinctly gloomy, when seen in the context of Channel 4's debut and the fact that when cable comes on line, besides the present networks, it'll face competition from breakfast TV and two satellite channels as well. But the government remains determined to 'wire up' Britain, so that we can be plugged into the 21st century.

This Thatcherite obduracy is worrying corporate TV, since the government only has two options for making cable TV a more attractive investment – subsidies and deregulation. Deregulation has an added attraction to the Thatcherites, since it might kill off that nest of lefties which they think infests the BBC and ITV. The more dicey cable looks, the more deregulation the government is likely to countenance.

In last Sunday's *Observer*, LWT's Director of Programmes, John Birt, presented the network's stock disaster scenario on deregulation. In the mid-'70s, Birt edited LWT's excellent *Weekend World* and along with Peter Jay originated one of the many critiques which periodically over the last decade have indicted the quality of our TV. The 'bias against understanding' charge made by Jay and Birt referred to TV's shallow coverage of events and its shunning of background analysis which aggravated 'the difficulties . . . a modern society faces in trying to solve its problems.' In contrast with his erstwhile colleague, Jay is now the Billy Graham of cable TV holding out the promised land of electronic publishing which we'll enter if we submit broadcasting to the 'beauty and subtlety' of the free market.

Like Jay on cable, I have a tendency to become evangelical about video. Unfortunately, until now, hardly any video programmes have been made solely for distribution in the 10,000 or so video outlets (more than bookshops!). The problem is there is little demand for original material because the main consumers of video are the council estate droolers whose life support system seems to consist of a social security cheque, a Tescos and a video shop offering a wide range of porn and nasties for rent.

But at last some original video material is now being made. It's being made without reference to the regulatory framework of TV because the producers aren't seeking network outlets; and it's being made by people without any experience in TV.

By a quirk of misfortune, I'm one of those people who, by virtue of having had an eponymous movie made about him, is a media 'name'. *McVicar* is one of those dreadful British crime films that the public flocks to see. It's recently been re-released and put out on video as well. This 'name' makes me attractive to producers, looking for a way catch the consumer's eye, so I've been involved in two examples of electronic publishing on video tape.

Movie is produced by a Covent Garden company with origins in advertising. As the title indicates the video is a consumer's guide to feature films which are available on video. It's slick, fast-rolling and before release was reckoned to be too sophisticated for your average video punter. Yet, in two weeks, with some skilful promotion it's sold roughly 10,000 copies to the video outlets for rental at 75p a night. It's a genuine example of electronic publishing. Its hour's programming probably cost £25,000, which in network TV terms is quite cheap.

I first became interested in *Private Spy* through wanting to write an article about the producers. Ian Cutler used to be a 'snatch photographer' on the *News of the World*. His partner John Duggan previously worked in video piracy until the courts put him out of business. *Private Spy* bears all the hallmarks of their origins.

It's a seedy, tacky video magazine whose approach, in classic Sunday newspaper style, is to use exposé news to traffic in what it condemns. The second edition claims that Norman Scott is a male prostitute. It has a feature on prostitution in King's Cross called 'Pimps, Punters, Policemen and Pimps'. This feature includes a montage of men's faces and car numbers of punters whom they filmed on the job and the offer of a prize to any viewer who identifies one!

Private Spy is shot, edited and marketed by Cutler and Duggan. They own the camera and editing suite where they produce their 'master' before having it 'duped' for distribution. They're going to sell 5,000 copies of their second edition. Again, however distasteful, it's another example of electronic publishing which is completely unlike anything seen on TV. Indeed, TV couldn't produce this sort of product because of the controls which camera crews have to observe.

John Duggan speaking: 'I want to do one called "Black Street Crime in London." Can you imagine hiding the camera in the Land Rover and tracking an old, white woman as she walks through Brixton with her purse on the top of her shopping bag. Then go outside the magistrates and ask the blacks as they come out, "We're doing a documentary on legal aid". Bring 'em on that way. Pull 'em onto the punch. The punters'd love it'.

The range of video magazines ought to expand to cater for more and more specialist tastes and interests. The people making them are going to be ideally situated to supply the programming needs of multi-channel cable TV. Certainly by the end of this decade the face of public broadcasting is likely, as Birt anticipates, to be drastically changed. □

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Christmas Double Issue 17/24 December — last copy by noon Tuesday, 14 December.

Issue dated 31 December — last copy by noon, Tuesday, 21 December.

Issue dated 7 January, 1983 — last copy by noon, Tuesday, 4 January.

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LISTINGS

THURS 9 DEC

LONDON WC1. Impact of the press on industrial relations. John Torode, Guardian leader writer speaks at meeting org. by Industrial Law Society. Poly of Central London, Red Lion Square, 7pm. Booze afterwards (wine & cheese social).

LONDON SE18. RACS Christmas rally. Woolwich Public Hall, Market St. E. P. Thompson, Ken Livingstone, Richard Balfe, Guy Barnett, Hilda Smith. Evening.

FRI 10 DEC

LONDON WC1. 4th Victor Jara Festival. Osvaldo Rodriguez & Dean Reed. Camden Centre, Bidborough St. Tickets £3.50. Forum for Latin American community in Europe. Theme: 'Stand up, look at your hands. Take your brother's hands, so you can grow.'

SAT 11 DEC

HEREFORD. Hereford & Worcs CND march & rally. Refuse cruise missiles etc. Assemble 10.30am at Ditchcroft, Worcs. race course.

LEAMINGTON. Leamington END rally. **Contact Leamington 312980.**

LONDON SE1. Fabian Society/Polish Solidarity campaign joint day seminar. Eastern Europe after Poland. Room 180, County Hall, 10am-4.30pm. £2/1 members. **Tel 01-222 8877.**

LONDON WC1. Human sexuality. Contemporary ideas on human sexual behaviour. Lecture room, Dept. Extra-mural Studies, U. of London.

LONDON SE1. Day conference on AES org. by Labour Party. Top speakers. Chairman: Tony Benn. County Hall.

ARCHWAY. Anti-Repression conference. Caxton House. Org. by Troops Out.

LONDON. Bermondsey, Peckham & Dulwich Labour Parties. 'Defend socialist policies, oppose expulsions'. 2-5pm, Walworth Town Hall, Walworth Road. Speakers: Reg Race, Peter Tatchell, Teresa Wrack, Richard Balfe, Jeremy Corbyn from Hornsey.

SUN 12 DEC

SELLY OAK. Selly Oak CND torchlight procession agaist cruise. Assemble 5.15pm outside Methodist Church, Cotteridge. Followed by Christmas Social.

LONDON WC1. Jewish Employment Action Group seminar on Racial discrimination at the workplace. Speakers: Geoffrey Bindman, Ian Macdonald, Sue Ollerearnshaw, Laurie Sapper. To be held at Development & Planning Unit, University College, 9 Endsleigh Gdns. Starts 7pm.

LONDON SW1. ICA — The Mall. Film 'Take It or Leave It' with Madness. Starts 3pm.

LONDON. Solidarity Lives, demonstration after one year of martial law. Assemble 1pm Hyde Park then at 6pm vigil outside the Polish Embassy. There will be, for the first time ever, an official TUC spokesman on the platform. **Tel 01-748 3065** for further details.

LONDON SE1. No pass laws to health. Conference on racial discrimination in Health. Venue County Hall starts 10am and lasts all day. Speakers include Amrit Wilson, Alf Dubbs, Cllr Bernie Grant from the health union NUPE. W/shops on racism in health, discriminatory fees etc.

GREENHAM COMMON NR NEWBURY. Picket on US air force base begins 10am.

MON 13 DEC

BRIGHTON. CND meeting with Dan Smith, expert on cruise and contributor to Labour Party defence policy. Friends Centre, Ship Street, Brighton, 7.30pm.

TUES 14 DEC

EDINBURGH. Stop US intervention in Central America. Film and Speakers from FDR/FLMN (Salvadorean opposition). Meet at Trades Council, Picardy Place. Time 7.30pm. Also speaking, Eric Clarke from the Scottish Miners.

ISLINGTON. Labour Party public meeting on Northern Ireland. Speakers — Gerry Adams from the Provisional Sinn Fein and Danny Morrison (editor of Republican News), Ernie Roberts MP and Val Veness, deplty leader of Islington Council. Venue Islington Town Hall, Upper Street. Meeting starts 8pm.

HARINGEY. Childcare in Haringey — where next. Speaker Toby Harris, chair of Haringey social services committee. United Reform Church, Colsterworth Close, N15, 8pm.

LONDON E2. Cinema of Women present three new films including Long Shadows of the Plantations, the story of Sylvia Woods. To be shown at Four Corners, 113 Roman Road, 7.30pm. Tickets £1.50.

WED 15 DEC

LONDON. Families against the Bomb. United Reform Church, Tetherdown, Muswell Hill N10. Concert with Beethoven, Holst, Richard Strauss. Tickets £2.

LONDON. Start of two-day conference on education: Repression or Liberation? Speakers will include Labour education spokesman Phillip Whitehead, Anthony Arblaster, Dr Richard Johnson and teaching union representatives. Conf. organised by World University Services. Further details: **01-226 6747.**

LONDON. All-day conference at South Bank Poly on small-scale combined heat and power scheme for public institutions. **Contact Ms Chris Richards at 01-929 8989.**

THURS 16 DEC

LONDON SE8. Women oppose nuclear threat. Planning meeting for Christmas vigil at Albany community centre, Douglas Way. Women only. Starts 7.30.

LONDON WC2. Peter Fuller on William Morris: Memory of the future. Meeting begins 7.30pm. Serious drinking at 6.30, White Swan, New Row. Meeting org. by the Socialist Society.

LONDON E2. Yet another Right on Lefty Theatre Group: The Battle for the Thankless Islands. St Hilda's Community Centre, Club Row. Starts 9pm.

FRI 17 DEC

LONDON N8. Hornsey Fabian Society. Peter Shore MP on the Alternative Economic Strategy. Starts 8pm at Hornsey Library, Harringey Park. Will he come clean on incomes policy?

LONDON. Development and Opportunities in Social Research. Speakers at this day-long event include David Donnison and Michael Posner, chairman of the Social Science Research Council. Subjects will include future funding on social research and the effect of the Tories attack on funding. **Details 01-828 8070: Chris Gostick.** Venue Kensington Town Hall, nearest tube Kensington High Street.

FORTHCOMING

31 DEC. OXON. Blockade USAF Upper Heyford 6.30-6.30 NVDA training at the camp on Sunday 11 Dec at 11am Camp Road, Upper Heyford, Oxon. **Phone Steeple Aston 40461.** This is now official CND policy.

21 JAN. CARDIFF. The human cost of nuclear war. The first of three national conferences organised by the Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons. Host of distinguished medical speakers. St Davids Hall, Cardiff. Applications to Alex Chown, 20 Palace Road, Llandaff, Cardiff. Chairmen of the conference: Sir Richard Doll, Sir Douglas Black, Prof Alwyn Smith, Dr John Gleisner.

22 JAN. BIRMINGHAM. West Midlands CND campaign strategy meeting. All day, St Francis Hall, Univ. of Birmingham.

29 JAN. LONDON. Improving Council House Estates organised by NACRO safe neighbourhoods unit. Workshops on Estate Tenants Organisations. Security, vandalism, decentralisation of services etc. Cost £3 at South Bank Polytechnic. **Tel for details 01-729 1366.**

29 JAN. LONDON. Racism and schools. One day conference at County Hall, org. by Communist Party. Starts 11am. Speakers: Farrukh Dhondy, Ray Chatwin and Norma Gibbs.

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad. under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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GERRY ADAMS (Sinn Fein Vice-President), Danny Morrison (editor Republican News), Ernie Roberts MP, Val Veness (deputy leader Islington Council) and other speakers at a Labour Party Public Meeting on Northern Ireland, Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, N1, 8 p.m. Tuesday 14 December.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Sunday 12 Dec. 8 p.m. Informal Q/A. Meeting 'Reincarnation & Karma'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

Conference

FAY WELDON, James Hemming, Jean Medawar, Patricia Hewitt, James Berry – speakers at Progressive League Jubilee Conference 'The Place of Progress' at High Leigh, Hoddesdon, 10-12 Dec. Price £30. Day visitors £5. Ring Joan Miller, 01-435 5393.

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